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Detectives fly to Russia to question businessmen
 Guardian, Monday December 4 2006

Ian Cobain, Jeevan Vasagar and Tom Parfitt in Moscow
 Scotland Yard officers are to fly to Russia to interview three businessmen among the last people to have seen Alexander Litvinenko alive before he was given a huge dose of radioactive poison. Detectives of the newly-formed counter-terrorism command may arrive in Moscow as early as today to question the trio, as well as two other men who may have met Mr Litvinenko during a (...)

(...) travelled to Washington last week to interview a former KGB agent, Yuri Shvets, who said he had vital information on the case. He (...)

Revealed: Litvinenko's Russian 'blackmail plot'
 Observer, Sunday December 3 2006

Mark Townsend, Jamie Doward, Tom Parfitt in Moscow and Barbara McMahon in Rome

The FBI has been dragged into the investigation of Alexander Litvinenko's deal emerged that he had planned to make tens of thousands of pounds blackmail Russian spies and business figures. The Observer has obtained remarkable te Russian academic, Julia Svetlichnaja, who met Litvinenko earlier this year and than 100 emails (...)

(...) the investigation travelled to Washington to interview a former KGB agent, who said he had vital information. He was a contact (...)

The lethal trail

Observer, Sunday December 3 2006

Linda MacDonald

1 November Alexander Litvinenko meets another former KGB spy Andrei Lugo

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business associate Dmitry Kovtun at the Millennium Hotel, Grosvenor Square. involvement in the poisoning. Later he meets Italian academic Mario Scaramell showed him emails from a shared source warning them their lives might be in c emails said that the same (...)

(...) emerges that officers from Scotland Yard's counter-terrorist command unit questioned Yuri Shvets, a former KGB spy who emigrated to the United States

'I can blackmail them. We can make money'

Observer, Sunday December 3 2006

Mark Townsend, Jamie Doward and Tom Parfitt in Moscow

It was perilous, but then Alexander Litvinenko was no stranger to risk. Over the months, the former Kremlin spy began finalising an extraordinary business project prove the most compelling motive yet for murder. Litvinenko claimed to have many senior sources in the heart of the FSB, the successor to the KGB, who would stream (...)

(...) a document were yesterday corroborated by another former Soviet intelligence Shvets, during questioning by Scotland Yard and the FBI. It is (...)

Olympic luxury for Russian elite

Observer, Sunday April 25 2004

Nick Paton Walsh in Moscow

Russia's delegation to the 2004 Olympics will live in an exclusive floating village metres off the Greek capital, with each room costing at least €10,000. The room Russia's competitors - they will stay in the athletes' village - but for an army of shipped in for all-expenses-paid trips. Russia has taken over the Westerdam ci

(...) Boris Yeltsin and Moscow mayor Yuri Luzhkov. A host of regional...the spokesman Gennady Shvets said part of the (...)

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Shock twist to 'nuke' murder

DATE: 07-15-2010
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By GRANT ROLLINGS
NOVEMBER 29, 2006

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FORMER Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko feared he had been poisoned by Italian academic Mario Scaramella, it was revealed yesterday.

Pal Yuri Felshtinsky, who wrote a book with Litvinenko, 43, says the stricken ex-KGB man named the Italian in a deathbed phone call.

He told Felshtinsky, 50, that Scaramella seemed nervous and ate nothing when they met in a London sushi restaurant on November 1, after which the Russian fell ill.

Police believe a tiny grain of radioactive Polonium-210 was dropped into Litvinenko's food. Scaramella, who headed an organisation which tracked dumped nuclear waste, has **DENIED** being responsible for the ex-spy's agonising demise.

Yesterday he was being quizzed by police at a safe house in the Home Counties.

Felshtinsky, a Russian historian who moved to the US in 1978, penned the book *Blowing Up Russia* with Litvinenko — who died in a London hospital last week. He believes top-ranking Russian secret service officers ordered the "hit" to send out a warning to defectors — especially billionaire Boris Berezovsky, a critic of President Vladimir Putin.

Felshtinsky said: "When I talked to Alexander around 12 November about who poisoned him, we were talking only about the Italian guy Mario. He was sure at this time that it was Mario. He was telling me that he was in a scheme."

Felshtinsky added: "There is no doubt this was done by the Russian government or FSB (Russia's secret service). I think it was a warning. It is also a demonstration that Russia doesn't care how the world reacts to what it is doing."

Blowing Up Russia is banned in its authors' homeland for "revealing state secrets". It alleged Putin and secret service chief Nikolai Platonovich Patrushev were behind blasts at apartment blocks in their country blamed on Chechen terrorists. The book says they were intended to start a war in Chechnya and win votes for Putin.

Litvinenko met Scaramella in Piccadilly Circus. They then walked to the Itsu sushi bar, where Scaramella gave Litvinenko a list of people he said had been earmarked for assassination by a squad of ex-KGB veterans. Litvinenko is believed to have died later from a heart attack brought on by the nuclear poison.

He wrote a last deathbed testament accusing Putin of ordering his death. High levels of radiation were later found at the sushi bar — and a radiation trail blazed in Litvinenko's wake at locations he visited afterwards.

A further five people were admitted to a clinic yesterday over fears they received radiation

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poisoning — taking the total to eight.

Most are understood to have been in the sushi bar when married dad Litvinenko, who lived in North London, visited. Prof Scaramella, 38, flew to Britain at Scotland Yard's request. Police stressed he was being treated as a witness and was **NOT** under arrest.

The Italian said: "I've always said I am willing to help the police and that is why I'm here. I'll tell them all that happened. Alexander was my friend."

Alex Goldfarb, a business associate of 60-year-old Boris Berezovsky, said the tycoon was shocked after radiation poison was found in *his* offices.

Mr Berezovsky said of Litvinenko: "I credit him with saving my life. He remained a close friend ever since."

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Who's who in the spy poisoning mystery

POSTED: 6:50 a.m. EST, December 5, 2006

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LONDON, England (CNN) – British detectives investigating the death of the former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko are now pursuing inquiries in both London and Moscow. CNN's The Briefing Room has compiled a guide to who's who in the spy scandal.

Alexander Litvinenko -- the spy

Litvinenko was a KGB agent for 18 years whose job was to fight organized crime and counter subversion. He came to Britain in 2000 after turning whistle blower on the FSB (the KGB's successor) and claiming he had been ordered to assassinate the oligarch - Boris Berezovsky (see below.)

Like other dissidents in London he was a vehement critic of President Putin and vocal about Chechen politics. He wrote "Blowing up Russia: Terror from Within," in which he claimed FSB agents and not Chechen rebels carried out a bomb attack on a Moscow apartment in 1999 which killed 300 people.

He died in University College Hospital, London on November 23 from a massive dose of the radioactive material polonium-210. In a deathbed statement he blamed Putin for his death -- something the Kremlin has strongly denied.



Alexander Litvinenko

Mario Scaramella -- the contact

An Italian security expert who was one of the last people to see Litvinenko alive.

He met the spy at a sushi bar in central London on November 1 to warn him that both their lives were in danger after reportedly uncovering evidence that the men were on a hit list.

Last week he also tested positive for polonium 210 but so far doctors say he is "well."

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Alexander Goldfarb -- the friend



Mario Scaramella

As Litvinenko lay dying in hospital, Alexander Goldfarb emerged as an unofficial spokesman for the spy and his family.

He is the executive director of the International Foundation for Civil Liberties in New York, which was set up by exiled Berezovsky in 2000.



Alexander Goldfarb

He met Litvinenko in a Russian prison in the late 1990s when he was director of a George Soros-funded project to tackle TB in the penal system and Litvinenko was awaiting trial on charges of abuse of office.

Yuri Shvets -- former KGB agent

A former KGB agent living in the U.S. who says he has given police the name of a suspect he believes orchestrated the killing of Litvinenko. On Monday he confirmed he had been questioned by British police and the FBI.

Shvets was a KGB major between 1980 and 1990 during which time he worked under cover in Washington as a correspondent for the Russian news agency, Tass. He emigrated to the U.S. in 1993 and wrote a book about his experiences.

Goldfarb says that Shvets had played a key-behind-the-scenes role in bringing about the Orange Revolution of 2004 which swept Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko to power.

Boris Berezovsky -- the exiled oligarch

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The colorful Berezovsky made his money during the Yeltsin years by taking control of many state assets from oil and car companies to property. He was part of the Yeltsin inner circle and led an extravagant lifestyle immortalized in the film, "Oligarch."

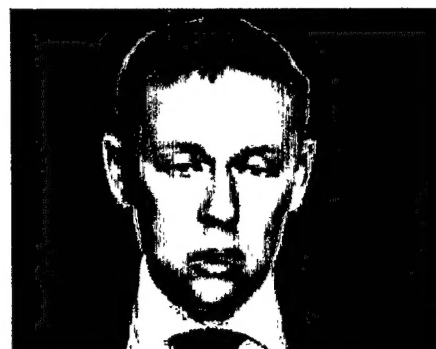
But when Putin came to power, Berezovsky fell out of favor and found his business activities under scrutiny. He fled to Britain in 2000 and was granted political asylum in 2003. He also saw the demise of his media ambitions after his stake in Russia's major television company ORT was sold, and his own TV6 channel was closed down.

Berezovsky and Litvinenko came to know each other in the aftermath of a failed assassination attempt on the oligarch in 1994. Litvinenko ended up later accusing the FSB of involvement in the conspiracy, a charge that severed his ties with the agency. The pair maintained contact once in Britain. Berezovsky is a fierce critic of Putin and sympathetic to the Chechen cause.

Andrei Lugovoi, Dmitri Kovtun, Vyacheslav Sokolenko -- the business associates

Another former Russian intelligence officer, Lugovoi says he and his business associates Kovtun and Sokolenko met Litvinenko at the Millennium Hotel on November 1 -- the day he was poisoned. The men say they were in London on business and to see a football match.

All three have protested their innocence, while Lugovoi told Britain's Sunday Times newspaper that they are being "framed" by the real culprit.



Andrei Lugovoi

Yegor Gaidar -- the "poisoned" former Russian PM

The former Russian PM Yegor Gaidar fell violently ill while attending a conference in Dublin just days after Litvinenko's death. His daughter said her father had been poisoned and that his alleged poisoning was linked to the death of Litvinenko.

The British embassy in Moscow issued a statement saying it did not believe there was any link between the two cases. Doctors in Moscow say they do not know what caused his mystery illness.



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Anna Politkovskaya -- murdered journalist

The investigative journalist dedicated her career to exposing human rights abuses. She was shot dead outside her flat in Moscow on October 7. No arrests have been made in connection with her killing.

She made her name reporting from Chechnya for Russia's liberal newspaper, Novaya Gazeta. She was the author of two books in English, "A Dirty War: A Russian Reporter in Chechnya" (2001), and "Putin's Russia" (2004).



Litvinenko was apparently investigating her murder.

Mikhail Trepashkin -- the convict

The former KGB agent is serving four years in a Urals jail for divulging state secrets. From behind bars he accuses the FSB of creating a hit squad to kill Litvinenko and other enemies of the Kremlin.

He wants to pass the information on to detectives.

Russia's prison service says the ex-agent will not be allowed to meet UK investigators.



Julia Svetlichnaja -- the Chechen expert

Svetlichnaja is London-based academic who is writing a book on Chechnya. She told Britain's Observer newspaper that Litvinenko had hoped to involve her in an audacious blackmail scheme. She said Litvinenko told her he had contacts in the FSB who would supply him with explosive details on Russian oligarchs and Kremlin figures. He then planned to use the information to blackmail them and wanted Svetlichnaja to help him.

John Reid and Sergey Lavrov -- the politicians

The British Home Secretary John Reid has promised the investigation will be far reaching. He says the police will follow wherever this investigation leads inside or

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outside Britain. "The worst thing we can do is speculate," he said. "This isn't a game of Cluedo."

Russia's Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has warned that continued suggestions of Russian official involvement in Litvinenko's death could damage relations with Britain.

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Report: Russian Security Service 'Led Poison Plot'

Nov. 20: Former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko is seen in his hospital bed at the University College Hospital in central London.

MOSCOW — Intelligence services in Britain are convinced that the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko was authorised by the Russian Federal Security Service.

Security sources have told The Times of London that the FSB orchestrated a "highly sophisticated plot" and was likely to have used some of its former agents to carry out the operation on the streets of London.

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"We know how the FSB operates abroad and, based on the circumstances behind the death of Mr Litvinenko, the FSB has to be the prime suspect," a source said yesterday.

The theory comes as the British police investigation moves to Russia where the British embassy in Moscow will today be tested for radiation.

The "precautionary tests" will be carried out in one room of the embassy by a team of experts who have travelled to Moscow with British police, the Foreign Office said.

Amid growing diplomatic tension over the continued furore, a spokesman stressed that the tests at the British embassy were just being undertaken as a precaution and the experts "did not expect to find anything".

Nine Scotland Yard detectives are in Moscow to question potential witnesses and those who met Litvinenko shortly before his death on November 23 after allegedly being poisoned with the radioactive isotope polonium-210.

A local Russian police force is likely to escort the British detectives during their trip, which could last several days or even weeks.

Intelligence officials say that only officials such as FSB agents would have been able to obtain sufficient amounts of polonium-210, the radioactive substance used to fatally poison Mr Litvinenko only weeks after he was given British citizenship.

MI5 and MI6 are working closely with Scotland Yard on the investigation. A senior police source told The Times yesterday that the method used to kill the 43-year-old dissident was intended to send a message to his friends and allies.

"It's such a bad way to die, they must have known," the source said. "The sheer organisation involved could only have been managed by professionals adept at operating internationally."

The British officers are determined to question a number of well-connected businessmen, despite a warning yesterday from Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, that speculation over the poisoning is straining relations between the two governments.

"It's unacceptable that a campaign should be whipped up with the participation of officials. This is of course harming our relations," Mr Lavrov said during a visit to Brussels.

He said that he had spoken to Margaret Beckett, the Foreign Secretary, "about the necessity to avoid any kind of politicisation of this matter, this tragedy."

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British ministers insist that diplomatic sensitivities will not be allowed to obstruct the scope of the Yard investigation.

John Reid, the Home Secretary, who was also in Brussels briefing his European counterparts on the Litvinenko affair, said: "The police will follow the evidence wherever it goes."

The main figure that the British counter-terror team want to question is **Andrei Lugovoi**, a former FSB agent.

He made three visits to London in the fortnight before Mr Litvinenko fell ill and met him four times at various restaurants and bars.

Mr Lugovoi, who is a successful entrepreneur, was briefly imprisoned in Moscow after he left the FSB. After his release his business career thrived and his company is reported to be worth more than £100 million.

Two hotels in London in which he stayed had traces of polonium-210, as did a British Airways aircraft that Mr Lugovoi travelled on.

He was among three Russians who last met Mr Litvinenko at the Millennium Hotel on November 1, the day that he fell ill.

Last night Mr Lugovoi told The Times that he and two business associates, **Dmitri Kovtun** and **Vyacheslav Sokolenko**, were ready to meet detectives.

The men have all denied involvement in any poison plot. Mr Lugovoi claims that he and his wife and children have been contaminated by polonium-210 and says that he is being "framed" for the killing.

Intelligence officials believe that a sizeable team was sent from Moscow to smuggle radioactive polonium-210 into Britain and to shadow Mr Litvinenko.

The judgment by British Intelligence has been strengthened by the knowledge that the FSB has legislative approval for eliminating terrorists and enemies of the state abroad, after the passing of a controversial anti-terrorism law in the summer.

The Yard team that arrived in Moscow last night has been told to take as long as it needs. Unlike in orthodox terrorist attacks, there is little chance that the killer is still in Britain and ready to strike again. Detectives have been warned to expect official obstruction from Moscow.

Sir Ian Blair, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, and his senior officers are being kept briefed daily on the progress of the investigation. The Health Protection Agency said that police have asked them to examine three addresses for traces of polonium-210.

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'I can blackmail them. We can make money'

As Scotland Yard officers fly to Washington to help the FBI quiz a former Soviet spy, The Observer reveals Alexander Litvinenko's amazing plot to extort cash from some of Russia's top figures

Mark Townsend, Jamie Doward and Tom Parfitt in Moscow

Sunday December 3, 2006

The Observer

It was perilous, but then Alexander Litvinenko was no stranger to risk. Over the summer months, the former Kremlin spy began finalising an extraordinary business proposition that may prove the most compelling motive yet for murder.

Litvinenko claimed to have made contact with senior sources in the heart of the FSB, the successor to the KGB, who would supply him with a stream of confidential dossiers on any target that the 43-year-old exile requested.

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These documents would, according to Litvinenko, be used to 'blackmail' some of Russia's most shadowy and formidable figures. It was simple: either they would pay or the world would learn their blackest secrets.

As Scotland Yard's inquiries widened to the US and Italy yesterday, it emerged that officers were looking at whether Litvinenko's money-making ploy precipitated his poisoning.

In early May, Litvinenko first approached Julia Svetlichnaja, a 33-year-old Russian-born academic who is examining the roots of the Chechen conflict for a book she is writing. Litvinenko asked if she was interested in becoming involved in his 'blackmail' project.

'He told me he was going to blackmail or sell sensitive information about all kinds of powerful people including oligarchs, corrupt officials and sources in the Kremlin,' she said. 'He mentioned a figure of £10,000 they would pay each time to stop him broadcasting these FSB documents. Litvinenko was short of money and was adamant that he could obtain any files he wanted.'

Litvinenko proved he had sources in the heart of the Russian security services by producing

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/russia/article/0,,1963038,00.html>

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what he said was a 100-page confidential FSB report from 2005 and forwarding it to Svetlichnaja, a politics student at the University of Westminster.

The report alleged links between Russian organised crime gangs and the Duma, the Russian parliament, and named a number of prominent politicians allegedly embroiled in high-level criminal activity.

The report, apparently genuine, was stored on a computer disc and is believed to have been smuggled from Moscow to London. It hailed from the most secret department of the FSB, the Department for the Analysis of Criminal Organisations, where Litvinenko worked as a senior operational officer in the Nineties.

It appears Litvinenko, a vociferous critic of President Vladimir Putin, may have finally acquired the firepower to hurt some of the Kremlin's most powerful interests. Svetlichnaja said: 'He did not seem worried. Quite the opposite; Litvinenko sensed he could finally make some money of his own after years of being supported by his friend [and fellow Russian exile] Boris Berezovsky.'

Litvinenko had apparently even started hawking around his plans during the immediate period before his death. Shortly before his death, Litvinenko claimed that some FSB files documented the business practices of British firms.

But the file that most excited him was the so-called 'Yukos dossier', which allegedly includes damaging material about how the Russian oil company once owned by oligarch Mikhail Khodorkovsky - recently jailed on fraud and tax-dodging charges - came to be taken over by the state. Three months ago, Russian prosecutors launched an investigation into Yukos bosses, accusing them of asset-stripping, charges they deny and say are politically motivated.

Litvinenko's claims that he had such a document were yesterday corroborated by another former Soviet intelligence officer, Yuri Shvets, during questioning by Scotland Yard and the FBI. It is likely that Litvinenko's ownership of the Yukos file may have come to the attention of Russia's security services shortly before he was poisoned. Weeks before he was contaminated with polonium 210, Litvinenko had travelled to Israel to hand over the dossier to Leonid Nevzlin, a Yukos executive whom Russia has been trying to extradite. Nevzlin is currently in self-imposed exile in Israel, but denies any wrongdoing and has given the dossier to the authorities.

The British police investigation has already taken counter-terrorism officers to the US in a line of inquiry that may prove to be connected. The questioning of former KGB spy Shvets by the Metropolitan Police and the FBI in Washington focused on an October meeting between Litvinenko and 'a contact'. Shvets, also an undercover spy in Washington during the Eighties, was the man who actually compiled the Yukos dossier, a business associate said.

The associate said: 'Shvets gave it to Sasha [Litvinenko], who then showed it to a Russian in London, boasting that he wrote it himself.'

Litvinenko's email list of confidantes reveals how Shvets, 53, and Italian security consultant Mario Scaramella frequently exchanged information on Russian politics. Last year, Shvets met Scaramella in Washington to discuss a parliamentary investigation that the Italian was conducting into Soviet spy activities.

Both knew it was an investigation that would make enemies. On 1 November, Scaramella told Litvinenko over lunch in an Itsu sushi restaurant in London, that they, along with Italian senator Paolo Guzzanti, were assassination targets. With Litvinenko now dead and Scaramella 'significantly' poisoned, Italian detectives have contacted Guzzanti to ascertain

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his safety.

Of interest to Scotland Yard are a number of emails sent by Litvinenko in the weeks before he was poisoned. One, seen by The Observer, was written by him just four days after the assassination of Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who had met Litvinenko shortly before she was shot in the head.

'This is why Putin's secret service killed Anna,' began one message sent to Svetlichnaja. Had the knowledge that Litvinenko's sudden access to humiliating FSB documents meant that, suddenly, he could no longer be ignored? Would it be better if he were silenced?

At the start of last week, Litvinenko's poisoning was being likened to the type of fiction woven by John Le Carre. Now, as the investigation's spread widens, the case has assumed a fantastical aura. Few dare predict its next twist.

So far, the radioactive trail touches some of London's best-known five-star hotels and, unexpectedly, the Ashdown Park hotel in East Sussex, where Scaramella was staying. Increasingly clear, though, is that the trail continues to lead to Moscow. But allegations that the Kremlin sanctioned the poisoning remain unfounded, as do claims that renegade Russian spies with a personal vendetta were to blame.

Elsewhere, forensic teams from the atomic weapons research establishment at Aldermaston are still trying to locate the source of the polonium. Evidence suggests the assassins struggled to contain the polonium with which they were working, leaking radioactive material wherever they went.

Among the theories that remain open is that the poisonings were an accident that happened while Litvinenko tried to assemble a dirty bomb for Chechen rebels. Those who know him believe he was crazy enough to attempt such a thing and, in the past week, some have implicated him in the smuggling of nuclear materials from Russia.

This week should bring the results of the postmortem on Litvinenko. For the first time, detectives will know how much polonium he ingested. Vast quantities would point to a murder; smaller quantities possibly to accidental contamination. From Washington to London to Moscow, detectives, governments and spies are watching and waiting.

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Revealed: Litvinenko's Russian 'blackmail plot'

- Poison victim 'had intelligence files'
- FBI probe KGB agent over new claims

See exclusive new pictures of Alexander Litvinenko

Mark Townsend, Jamie Doward, Tom Parfitt in Moscow and Barbara McMahon in Rome

Sunday December 3, 2006

The Observer

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Alexander Litvinenko with a Scottish bonnet, Chechen swords and KGB gauntlets. Photograph: Copyright Guardian News and Media. All rights reserved. To buy or license these pictures contact Eyevine: +4420 8709 8709 / info@eyevine.com

The FBI has been dragged into the investigation of Alexander Litvinenko's death after details emerged that he had planned to make tens of thousands of pounds blackmailing senior Russian spies and business figures.

The Observer has obtained remarkable testimony from a Russian academic, Julia Svetlichnaja, who met Litvinenko earlier this year and received more than 100 emails from him. In a series of interviews, she reveals that the former Russian secret agent had documents from the FSB, the Russian agency formerly known as the KGB. He had asked Svetlichnaja, who is based in London, to enter into a business deal with him and 'make money'.

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Litvinenko also handed a series of pictures of himself to Svetlichnaja that are published by The Observer today. One shows him with murdered Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, another serving as an army officer in an elite Russian army unit two decades ago and the third draped in the Union flag celebrating getting his British passport just before he was poisoned.

We can also reveal that Scotland Yard officers involved in the investigation travelled to Washington to interview a former KGB agent, Yuri Shvets, who said he had vital information. He was a contact of Mario Scaramella, the Italian security consultant being treated at London's University College Hospital after having been found to have been contaminated with polonium. His doctors said yesterday that he did not appear to be suffering from radiation poisoning.

'I believe I have a lead that can explain what happened,' Shvets confirmed last week before he was interviewed as a witness in the presence of FBI agents. Shvets, who lives in Virginia and is now apparently in hiding, declined to elaborate. However, a business associate of Shvets, who asked to remain anonymous, told The Observer that Litvinenko had claimed in the weeks before his death that he possessed a dossier containing damaging revelations about the Kremlin and its relationship with the Yukos oil company. The associate claimed that Shvets compiled the dossier.

Yukos was once owned by the oligarch Mikhail Khordorkovsky, who is serving seven years in a Russian jail for tax evasion. His supporters say he was convicted as a result of a show trial orchestrated by the Kremlin.

The claims that Litvinenko had a dossier containing damaging information about the Kremlin echo separate claims he made to Svetlichnaja, who interviewed the former KGB agent earlier this year for a book she is writing about Chechnya.

In today's Observer, Svetlichnaja, a politics student at the University of Westminster, says Litvinenko claimed he had access to Russian intelligence documents containing information on individuals and companies that had fallen foul of the Kremlin.

'He told me he was going to blackmail or sell sensitive information about all kinds of powerful people, including oligarchs, corrupt officials and sources in the Kremlin,' she said. 'He mentioned a figure of £10,000 that they would pay each time to stop him broadcasting these FSB documents. Litvinenko was short of money and was adamant that he could obtain any files he wanted.'

Litvinenko's access to such documents could have made him an enemy of both big

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business interests and the Kremlin. However, his claims are almost impossible to verify and some political analysts have gone as far as to dismiss him as a fantasist.

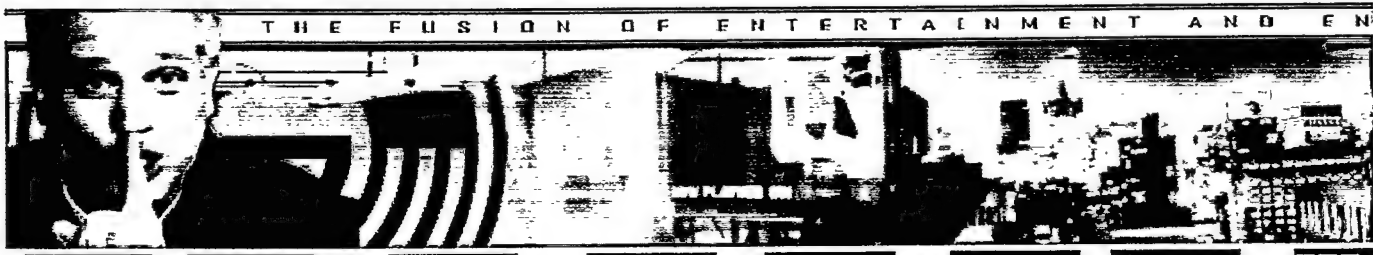
Shvets, 53, emerges as yet another character in an espionage saga linking Britain, Italy, the US and Russia. Like Litvinenko, Shvets worked for the Russian billionaire Boris Berezovsky, whom the Kremlin has tried unsuccessfully to extradite from Britain. Shvets was a KGB major between 1980 and 1990, during which time he worked undercover in Washington as a correspondent for the Russian news agency, Tass. He emigrated to the US in 1993 and wrote a book about his experiences.

Shvets met Scaramella in Washington last year to discuss the Italian's role as a consultant to the Mitrokhin commission, set up by the Italian government to investigate Russian infiltration during the Cold War. It has been alleged that Scaramella discussed with the commission's chief, Paolo Guzzanti, whether they should look for evidence that Romano Prodi, Italy's Prime Minister, was linked to the KGB. Prodi denies any link.

Last night another link connecting the worlds of Italian politics and Russian intelligence emerged. Gerard Batten, an MEP for the UK Independence Party, confirmed Litvinenko had told him a man called 'Sokolov', who worked undercover as a Russian agent in the Seventies as a reporter for Tass, was the key link between senior Italian politicians and the KGB.

This week Scotland Yard will interview two Russians who met Litvinenko on the same day he had lunch with Scaramella. Andrei Lugovoy, a former agent with the FSB, and Dmitry Kovtun met Litvinenko in the Millennium Mayfair hotel. Traces of polonium have been found on the planes on which they are believed to have travelled between London and Moscow.

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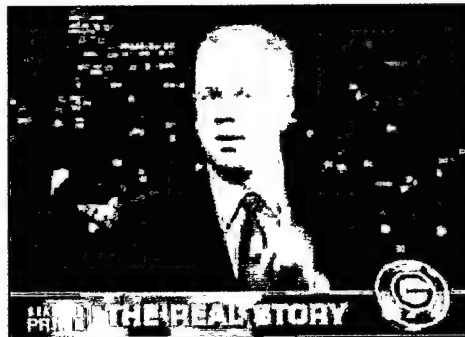
THE REAL STORY

The Real Story: The Poisoned Russian Spy

Updated December 4, 2006

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By now you probably know the story of the former Russian spy who was recently poisoned to death in England. I've been wanting to talk about this story for a while now, but I kept holding off because I didn't feel like I was able to see the complete picture. Everyone keeps saying that the Russian Government - quite possibly all the way up to President Putin - played a role in the poisoning, but the missing piece for me has always been WHY?



Finally, this weekend, as I spoke to a college professor friend, the answer became clear...the Real Story is that Russia is slowly but surely retreating away from Democracy. Events over the last few years that seemed like isolated incidents at the time are now lining up like runway lights pointing directly to that conclusion.

First, in late 2003, the richest man in Russia at the time, was arrested by agents from the FSB - the KGB's successor spy agency. But what's most interesting is the timing of that arrest - it came right on the heels of this guy acquiring a prominent Russian newspaper and hiring an investigative journalist critical of President Putin. He's now in prison serving a nine year sentence and those stories about Putin will probably never run.

Then, about a year later, Putin decided that the whole system of people freely electing Russia's governors seemed a little TOO OOO, I don't know, "fair" so he decided to end it. Take a wild guess at who gets to appoint the governors now - yeah, Putin. Colin Powell said at the time that Putin was "pulling back" on democratic reforms and added that, quote, "political power is not yet fully tethered to the law."

But it wasn't until a couple of months ago that we all saw just how lawless

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that political power really is. On October sixth, a Russian journalist was assassinated while waiting for an elevator in her apartment building. She also happened to be an outspoken critic of the Putin administration who, within days, was about to publish a major story about human rights violations...just another isolated incident, right?

And that brings us back to the former KGB spy. You'll never guess what he was doing at the time of his poisoning. Yep, investigating the assassination of that Russian journalist. In fact, his poisoning came just after meeting with a source who supposedly had inside knowledge about the killing. Are things starting to line up for you yet?

This killing, like the arrest of the wealthy administration critic and the death of the outspoken journalist are sending a clear message to others: criticizing Russia will have swift and severe consequences.

That is not how a democracy operates. But maybe that's because President Putin has no interest in running a real democracy in the first place. After all, it's much easier to rule through centralized power; fear; and intimidation - it's much easier to rule as czar...or a dictator.

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Addressing the New Strategic Realities Emerging in Eurasia

Wednesday, December 6, 2006 -- Volume 3, Issue 225

IN THIS ISSUE:

- *Litvinenko case reveals enormous Soviet plutonium program
- *Nuclear power to replace Russian gas
- *Fight brewing over dismissal of Ukrainian foreign minister

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THE POLONIUM TRAIL LEADS TO MOSCOW

Officials investigating the lethal poisoning of former Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) officer Alexander Litvinenko in London have widened their inquiry to Moscow. U.K. Home Secretary John Reid told reporters, "British police will be going to Russia to continue their inquiries," and he vowed that the investigation "will continue to go wherever the evidence leads" (AFP, December 4).

On Monday, December 4, British detectives arrived in Moscow to question witnesses and possible suspects, including former FSB operative Andrei Lugovoi. Litvinenko met Lugovoi, Dmitry Kovtun, and Vyacheslav Sokolenko at London's Millennium Hotel on November 1, the day he fell ill. All three have protested their innocence, while Lugovoi has said that he believes the real culprit is framing them (AFP December 4). Lugovoi told *The Sunday Times* (December 3) that he and his family have also been infected by radioactive polonium-210.

But did the polonium come to London directly from Russia or somewhere else?

The New York Times reported on December 3 that polonium-210 originating from Russia may be easily obtained in the United States. An anti-static fan made by NRD, of Grand Island, NY, reportedly contains up to 10 lethal doses of polonium-210 and sells for \$225. The problem is that no civilian experts seem to know for sure how much a "lethal dose" of polonium-210 is, while Russian and U.S. military experts may know, but do not say.

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Mario Scaramella, an Italian security expert, met Litvinenko on November 1 at the Itsu sushi bar in London, where the poisoning apparently took place. Scaramella reportedly has been

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contaminated with polonium-210 at five times the fatal level (AFP December 4). But apparently that dose was sub-lethal, as Scaramella has not exhibited any symptoms of radioactive sickness.

London police sources have apparently confirmed that the dose administered to Litvinenko was "at least 100 times" the amount needed to kill somebody (*Sunday Times*, December 3). *Izvestiya* quoted *The Guardian* yesterday (December 5) as saying that Litvinenko had been poisoned by polonium worth €29.7 million (\$40 million) and that this must mean that the poisoning was not intentional, since no one would spend that much money to kill one defector. *Izvestiya* implied that Litvinenko was making a radioactive ("dirty") bomb for terrorist purposes and that only exiled Russian oligarch Boris Berezovsky could possibly bankroll the purchase of that much polonium. By implication, this extraordinary amount of polonium seems to exclude the possibility that it could have been purchased without notice in the United States, where it is sold in batches worth \$30 to \$225.

In Russia, polonium-210 is reportedly produced at the Mayak nuclear industrial plant in Chelyabinsk-65 (also known as Ozersk) in the Urals region (*Izvestiya*, December 1). Ozersk is one of the "closed" nuclear cities that Russian citizens cannot enter without a special pass. In the first decades of the Soviet atomic program, this city was the main center for producing weapons-grade plutonium. Now it is engaged in repossessing radioactive waste and in producing radioactive isotopes.

Recently Russian officials and state-controlled media (*Izvestiya* belongs to state-owned gas monopoly Gazprom) have been frantically denying any involvement in the Litvinenko case, while pointing in all possible other directions. Yesterday (December 5) *Izvestiya* published a commentary by Kremlin-connected TV anchor Mikhail Leontyev suggesting that the Anglo-Americans are deliberately distributing traces of polonium around London to implicate Russia.

However, in the frenzy of total denial, Russian authorities have apparently not noticed the clear contradictions in their statements. The government RIA-Novosti news agency reported Monday, quoting Russia's nuclear agency Rosatom, "The only nuclear reactor producing polonium-210 stopped functioning two years ago and the IAEA was informed of that last week." At the same time, Rosatom has continued to extract 8 grams of previously made polonium-210 per month for shipment exclusively to the United States. No polonium could have been "lost" or stolen in Russia, states Rosatom (RIA-Novosti, December 4).

Polonium-210 decays rapidly; its half-life is only 138 days. Today, two years since the reactor ceased production, over 98% of the overall polonium-210 made in Russia previously has been transformed into solid lead. This nuclear decay continues, but Russia still continues to meet its export contract obligations. This can only mean that tens or hundreds of kilos of polonium, perhaps literally tons, enough to kill millions and millions of people, were originally produced.

The Russian polonium stockpile is melting like snow in spring because the legitimate market demand is low, thus using some of it on Litvinenko would be easy. But why produce that much of the isotope in the first place? Perhaps to make "dirty" bombs so minute that they can be carried unnoticed, as the radiation may be stopped by a paper wrapper. Such bombs would be ideal for diversion (terrorist) attacks in major Western cities (in metro systems) by Russian Special Forces squads and agents in the run up to all-out nuclear war. The use of polonium-210 would allow agents to guard themselves against harm by simply donning cloth respiratory masks.

Such clandestine weapons make much more sense than the nuclear suitcase bombs that were so

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much discussed in the 1990s (Reuters, September 5, 1997). The possible existence of polonium bombs in the Russian nuclear arsenal could explain Moscow's present obsession with "dirty" bombs as an explanation for the Litvinenko poisoning. Since polonium expires rapidly, Russia had to make it constantly in extraordinary quantities to be prepared in the event of possible weapons use.

It is good to know that Russia has apparently terminated its polonium weapons of mass destruction production program. Will the Litvinenko case bring other such revelations as it evolves?

--Pavel Felgenhauer

LUKASHENKA OPTS FOR NUCLEAR POWER

Belarus, the Soviet republic most heavily affected by fallout from the 1986 nuclear accident at Chernobyl, has decided to develop its own nuclear power industry.

On December 1, Mikhail Myasnikovich, chairman of the National Academy of Sciences, made the announcement at a meeting concerning the improvement of energy security in the country attended by President Alexander Lukashenka. In a subsequent speech, Lukashenka remarked that nuclear power is clearly the best alternative for Belarus to eradicate itself from a complex predicament in energy resources. About 85% of all its energy needs are based on imports; and since his recent meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Lukashenka believes that there will soon be a deficiency in hydrocarbon supplies in Russia that could have an adverse impact on the Belarusian economy. Though there are several possible solutions to such energy dependency (including a price rise for imported Russian gas in 2007), the decision to turn to nuclear power was accepted unanimously by meeting participants, and the president requested that the government's proposal be forwarded to the Security Council.

The original plan was drafted last May and has been widely circulated. The station is to be a VVER-1000 plant, based initially on two reactors that will either be of Russian or French design. The first reactor is anticipated to be on line by 2015, but could be in service as early as 2013, if workers adhere to the timetable suggested by the president. Each 1,000-megawatt reactor will cost a reported \$1.3-\$1.7 billion, a figure that likely excludes the costs of decommissioning and burial of radioactive waste. Technical supervision will be in the hands of the United Institute of Energy and Nuclear Research of the National Academy of Sciences, and preparatory work is occurring in cooperation with international organizations, headed by the IAEA.

By commissioning the two reactors, Belarus could cut its reliance on Russian energy by 24%. In turn the share of nuclear power in the energy balance of the country could increase to 20%, with natural gas falling to 50% within the next 15 years, if the project runs on schedule. By the middle of the 21st century, the proportion of nuclear energy could conceivably be 85%, which would be among the highest in the world.

A widespread debate has taken place over the past few years as to the likely whereabouts of such a station. Evidently there were several possible sites, but the actual choice is the same as projected several years ago, before a 10-year moratorium on commissioning nuclear reactors went into operation in 1998. The decision could hardly be more controversial: Krasnapol'e in Chavusy region, Mahileu oblast. The location is 40 miles southeast of the city of Mahileu and 60 miles

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from the Russian border. It is also this same distance from the village of Shklou, in which Lukashenka was raised. More significant, it is in a swathe of territory known to be contaminated with radioactive cesium in the soil at a level of more than 1 curie per square kilometer. An independent NGO, the Belarusian Charitable Fund "For the Children of Chernobyl," has focused on health problems in this area for the past 20 years, sending hundreds of children for periods of recuperation to Europe and North America. The incidence of thyroid gland cancer among young people has risen more than 25 times since the accident in the republic as a whole.

Lukashenka dismisses such concerns as a product of "radiophobia and the post-Chernobyl syndrome." However, the opposition to nuclear power in the republic is undeniable. In early November, according to a poll conducted by the Vilnius-based NISEPI, only 32.5% of those surveyed supported the idea of a domestic nuclear power industry, 47.7% were opposed, and 14.5% were undecided on the issue. The president maintains that it will be possible to use propaganda to convince Belarusians that their fears are unjustified, and he made began by describing the reliance of various countries on nuclear power, led by France. He noted that 60 new nuclear reactors are currently being commissioned worldwide, which will add to the 442 already in operation. Belarus, he added, is "surrounded" by Russian and Ukrainian reactors -- for some reason he omitted the Ignalina station in Lithuania. Thus, he states, it is illogical for the population to object to his latest scheme.

Anti-nuclear sentiment has a lengthy history in Belarus, where a nuclear power and heating plant not far from today's Minsk-2 international airport was abandoned after the Chernobyl accident. Demonstrations against nuclear power led directly to the establishment of the Belarusian Popular Front, Belarus's main opposition movement between 1989 and 1993. For Lukashenka, Chernobyl-related protests are a refuge and priority of the opposition and his government has insisted that the contaminated land can be returned to cultivation. The announcement of the new station is an indicator both of the government's desperation to reduce its reliance on imports of Russian gas for its energy needs and an indicator of the dearth of real options.

(Belaruskaya delovaya gazeta, *Belorusskie novosti*, Charter 97, December 1; Belorusskoe telegrafnoe agenstvo, December 1, 4; RIA-Novosti, December 5; <http://bbfchernobyl.iatp.by/>)

--David Marples

YUSHCHENKO LOSING KEY MINISTERS

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko has lost at least two of the four ministers who remained loyal to him while working in Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich's cabinet. Parliament, which is dominated by the Anti-Crisis Coalition (AKK) -- consisting of Yanukovich's Party of Regions (PRU), the Communists, and the Socialists (SPU) -- has accepted the resignation of Family and Youth Minister Yuriy Pavlenko, got rid of Interior Minister Yuriy Lutsenko, and fired Foreign Minister Borys Tarasyuk. Yushchenko has reconciled himself with Lutsenko's departure, but he flatly disagreed with the dismissal of Tarasyuk, who had been appointed to the cabinet under the president's quota.

Yanukovich and the AKK have long been unhappy with Tarasyuk, abhorring his pronouncedly pro-NATO course and independent behavior. Tarasyuk never missed an opportunity to recall that he was Yushchenko's minister, not Yanukovich's. Formal grounds for his dismissal appeared in

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October, when the Our Ukraine bloc joined the opposition camp in parliament (see EDM, October 10). Tarasyuk leads one of the bloc's main parties -- the People's Movement.

Yanukovych and Tarasyuk quarreled ahead of Yanukovych's December 3-7 visit to the United States. On November 28, the Foreign Ministry told U.S. Ambassador William Taylor that Yanukovych's visit would be postponed indefinitely. Tarasyuk explained that Yanukovych had failed to provide Yushchenko with the agenda for his visit in a timely manner. At the cabinet meeting on November 29, Yanukovych forwarded the agenda to Yushchenko, and Arseny Yatsenyuk, the deputy head of Yushchenko's secretariat, promptly announced that Yanukovych's visit would take place. At the same meeting, Yanukovych signed a letter requesting parliament to fire Tarasyuk, with whom, he explained, he had "failed to find a common understanding for three months."

Yushchenko rejected Yanukovych's request as "unacceptable," another deputy head of Yushchenko's secretariat, Oleksandr Chaly, said on November 29. Parliament disregarded Yushchenko's opinion. Addressing parliament on December 1, Deputy Prime Minister Andriy Klyuyev said that Tarasyuk's attempt to postpone Yanukovych's visit to Washington "behind the prime minister's back" was his most serious mistake. Tarasyuk's dismissal was approved by 247 deputies in the 450-seat body on the same day.

The situation with Tarasyuk is complicated, as only Yushchenko can nominate a replacement for that post, according to the constitution. Moreover, Yushchenko argues that parliament had no right to fire Tarasyuk, as the procedure of dismissing the ministers appointed under the presidential quota is not clearly formulated in the constitution. Yushchenko adviser Ihor Koliushko said that the presidential secretariat would appeal to the Constitutional Court regarding Tarasyuk. For the time being, Tarasyuk carries on as caretaker foreign minister.

A court in Kyiv reinstated Tarasyuk as minister on December 5, but Tarasyuk was not allowed to attend the regular cabinet meeting on December 6, and Justice Minister Oleksandr Lavrynovych explained this was because Tarasyuk is no longer a minister. Tarasyuk said he would sue the cabinet.

It has proved easier for Yanukovych to get rid of Interior Minister Lutsenko, who did not belong to Yushchenko's quota in the cabinet. The AKK initially tried to use corruption allegations as grounds for Lutsenko's dismissal (see EDM, November 22), but the charges were weak. On November 28, a court in Kyiv invalidated a lower-court verdict to fine Lutsenko for giving firearms as presents. On November 30, Yanukovych said that he would like to see Lutsenko fired for "excessive politicization" of the Interior Ministry. On December 1 parliament dismissed Lutsenko by 248 votes.

Until the very last moment the second-largest element of the AKK, the SPU, hesitated on Lutsenko, who used to be a Socialist himself. They agreed to his dismissal only when Yanukovych's team promised that Lutsenko would be replaced by a Socialist. On December 1, the leader of the SPU's parliamentary faction, Vasyl Tsushko, was approved as interior minister by 246 votes. The chief of Yushchenko's secretariat, Viktor Baloha, welcomed the appointment of Tsushko, whom he called "a balanced politician." Tsushko, 43, is a former state farm director. He has been a member of the SPU caucus in parliament since 1994 and briefly served as Odessa governor in 2005-2006.

Also on December 1 parliament elected a new family and youth minister, Viktor Korzh, a PRU

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member and retired police general. Korzh replaced Yuriy Pavlenko, whose resignation parliament approved on November 29. Pavlenko preferred his Our Ukraine membership to serving in a cabinet that Our Ukraine opposes. Korzh is "not a supporter of revolutionary approaches," he told his new subordinates on November 30, according to Interfax.

Speaking in an interview with the BBC, Yushchenko said that Lutsenko's dismissal "did not contribute to stability," and that he had informed Yanukovych that Tarasyuk's dismissal was "inexpedient." Yushchenko insisted that parliament had no right to dismiss Tarasyuk and vowed, "Tarasyuk will continue to work." Yanukovych dismissed Yushchenko's statement on Tarasyuk on December 1, saying that Yushchenko "has the right to express his point of view." In an effort to preserve some control over key ministries, on December 4 Yushchenko signed a decree requesting the cabinet not to make appointments to top positions at the Ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, and Defense without his approval.

(Channel 5, November 28, 29, December 4; *Ukrayinska pravda*, November 29, December 1, 4; *Kommersant Ukraina*, Interfax-Ukraine, November 30; BBC Ukrainian Service, UNIAN, December 1; ICTV, December 6)

--Pavel Korduban

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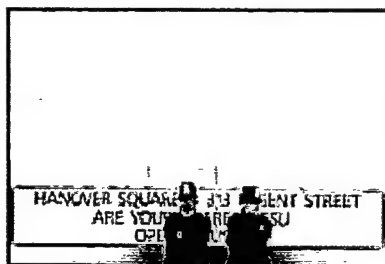
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Litvinenko killed over dossier on Russian: Shvets

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By John Joseph

LONDON.(Reuters) - Murdered Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko was killed because of an eight-page dossier he had compiled on a powerful Russian figure for a British company, a business associate told the BBC on Saturday.

Litvinenko died in London on November 23 after receiving a lethal dose of radioactive polonium 210. On his deathbed, he accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of ordering his killing. The Kremlin has denied involvement.

Ex-spy Yuri Shvets, who is based in the United States, said Litvinenko had been employed by Western companies to provide information on potential Russian clients before they committed to investment deals in the former Soviet Union.

He said Litvinenko was asked by a British company to write reports on five Russians and asked Shvets for help. The British company was not named. Shvets said he had passed Litvinenko the information for the dossier on one individual in September.

The BBC said it had obtained extracts of the dossier, which British detectives also have, from an unnamed source. The BBC said the report contained damaging personal details about a "very highly placed member of Putin's administration".

"Litvinenko obtained the report on September 20," Shvets told the BBC. "Within the next two weeks he gave the report to Andrei Lugovoy. I believe that triggered the entire assassination."

Lugovoy is a former Russian spy who told Reuters on Thursday he had known Litvinenko casually for nearly a decade and had worked closely with him during 2005, meeting him about 10 times. Continued...

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COMMENTARY

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License to Kill
By BORIS VOLODARSKY
December 20, 2006: Page A18

Today Russia celebrates the Day of the Chekist, or "spy." It comes only weeks after a former intelligence officer living in exile in London, Alexander Litvinenko, was murdered by polonium 210. Whether his assassination was the work of his former comrades, we still don't know for sure.

But this day is special to Russia's spies for another reason: It's the 25th anniversary of the creation of a covert unit in Russian intelligence whose officers are trained to "liquidate" people abroad. In 1981, the Soviet Politburo secretly approved a proposal from then KGB Chairman Yuri Andropov and Gen. Yuri Drozdov, the chief of the agency's Department S, which ran undercover agents abroad, to build an internal quasi-military arm -- called Vypmel -- dedicated to assassination, terror and subversion on enemy territory, above all against the U.K. and U.S.

"Vypmel was originally established to handle special tasks outside our country," its former chief, Gen. Vladimir Pronichev, told Russian media earlier this year. "Until the early 1990s, Vypmel trained its specialists first in foreign languages to insure that they would not be uncovered by a wrong accent or pronunciation. They were taught the history of a specific region, its national traditions and mentality and the details of everyday life," he said, to create a "universal soldier." "[This] special-purpose group – professionals of the highest caliber – simply did not know the word 'impossible,'" he noted. "A clear-cut routine was adopted: 10 days for preparing an operation and five more days for eliminating all mistakes made in the initial preparation."

My co-author, Oleg Gordievsky, recalls that when he was the KGB's London resident (chief of station) in 1985, Gen. Drozdov personally gave him unusual orders. He was told to find empty houses in Britain that could be used to hide people or weapons. He was asked to pick out suitable places for caches of wireless transmitters, canned food, hand arms and ammunition, and identity papers. Drozdov's shopping list suggested that the KGB was planning for future Vypmel operations. The unit was new, but not the job. A decade earlier, Oleg Lyalin, the London KGB station officer, had made similar preparations for subversive operations, including mass poisoning and political assassination, in case of war. Lyalin was recruited by the MI5 in 1971, and soon after was the only special operations officer active in Britain to defect.

In 1983, as a 28-year-old Soviet military intelligence officer, I joined a special training program, the same one used by a then highly secret and fledgling Vympel. Our group was sent to a special camp in the forest near Kazlu Ruda, then in Soviet Lithuania, to learn how to work behind enemy lines. We were regularly parachuted near the Polish border and taught to remove arms and radio transmitters from booby-trapped caches, cross the border covertly, meet agents at night and orient ourselves in the unfamiliar territory. We also were trained to handle

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explosives, shoot with either hand, drive all sorts of vehicles, and approach well-guarded installations. Our instructors regaled us with accounts of their storming of the Taj-Beck palace in Kabul four years before and killing then Afghan Premier Hafizullah Amin.

This work continues in today's Russia. During a recent Moscow news conference, a retired Vypel officer, Vladimir Kozlov, said that special task groups of Russian secret services — that are now broken out into the Main Intelligence Directorate of the Army, the Foreign Intelligence Service and the Federal Security Service (FSB) — have staff specially trained to carry out missions abroad. The most recent example came in February 2004 when Russian agents blew up a car carrying Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, a Chechen leader, and his little son, in Qatar. Although all three assassins were arrested red-handed and tried in local courts, they were soon returned to Russia, and feted like heroes. Boris Yeltsin disbanded Vypel in 1993 but two years later the unit was largely re-established as Directorate V, the special operations group inside the FSB.

This July, the Russian Duma approved a law allowing the president to use his special services to assassinate terrorists and any other enemies of the state abroad. So any critic of the Putin regime in the West may, in full compliance with Russian law, have an appointment with a poison-tipped umbrella. Who could have predicted, though, that the poison would be radioactive.

Mr. Volodarsky, a former Soviet military intelligence officer, is author, with Oleg Gordievsky, of the forthcoming "KGB: The West Side Story."

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Russia -- the usual suspected assassin Kremlin denies links to unsolved murders

Anna Badkhen, Chronicle Staff Writer

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It could be a Cold War thriller.

A former KGB agent is killed by poisoning. The men behind the Kremlin walls are assumed to be at fault. Official denials are met with knowing shrugs.



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Whether the Russian government is really behind the death of former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko, 21st century Russia still looks like the kind of country that would assassinate its adversaries James Bond-style by slipping radioactive polonium-210 into their sushi.

After all, a former KGB spy holds the nation's highest office. Former intelligence operatives are senior Cabinet members. The state controls virtually every media outlet. Many who, like Litvinenko, dare to criticize the government are intimidated, imprisoned or exiled. Some are murdered, their cases unsolved.

The Kremlin obstructs the work of international civil liberties watchdogs and silences domestic adversaries who criticize human rights abuses, particularly in the war-torn republic of Chechnya.

Given this record, it is not surprising that many people have been quick to pin the blame on the Kremlin, even though the Kremlin's many accusers have offered no evidence of its guilt, said Sarah Mendelson, an expert on Russia at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

"One could imagine that somebody in the Russian state went after him," said Mendelson of Litvinenko, who had made some particularly damaging assertions about Russia's war in the breakaway Chechen republic. "We know that people have been silenced or disappeared in relation to Chechnya."

In his book, "Blowing Up Russia: Terror From Within," Litvinenko

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wrote that Russian President Vladimir Putin and the KGB's successor, the FSB, had orchestrated the 1999 apartment bombings that killed nearly 300 people across Russia, paving the way for the redeployment of Russian troops to Chechnya and for Putin's ascent to the presidency. The government insisted the bombing was the work of Chechen separatists.

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Several other Russians who investigated the 1999 bombings also have been killed, their murders so far unsolved. Legislator Sergei Yushenkov, who had set up an independent panel to investigate the bombings, was shot and killed in 2003. Later that year, another legislator and member of the panel, Yuri Shchekochikhin died in a Moscow hospital after contracting an illness that has yet to be explained.

Shchekochikhin also was a high-ranking editor of the newspaper Novaya Gazeta, one of the few remaining forums for dissenters in Russia. Last month, Anna Politkovskaya, a famed Novaya Gazeta journalist who had criticized Putin and the war in Chechnya and was investigating government corruption, was shot to death in Moscow. At the time of his poisoning, **Litvinenko** was investigating Politkovskaya's slaying. On his deathbed, in a London hospital, he blamed Putin for killing him.

The Kremlin dismissed the allegations as "sheer nonsense." "This chain of events plays right into the hands of those who would wish to compromise Russia in the world arena," wrote the pro-Kremlin daily Komsomolskaya Pravda.

Aware of its increasingly poor image abroad, Russia has embarked on an ambitious public relations campaign to counter what it says is anti-Russian bias in the West. Last December, it launched "Russia Today," a 24-hour, English-language satellite television news channel beaming news bulletins with a pro-Kremlin slant and feel-good features about Russian culture to Asia, Europe and North America on a \$40 million annual budget.

"There's a real 'besieged fortress' mentality, and it seems to prevail among those who are sitting in the Kremlin, about real and perceived enemies beyond the Kremlin walls," said Andrew Kuchins, an expert on Russia at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace in Washington.

In a report released last week, the United Nations' Committee Against Torture accused Russia of torturing detainees, charged that people continued to disappear in Chechnya and urged Russia to address numerous reports of hazing in the military and the harassment and killing of rights activists.

The **Litvinenko** affair is not the first time Russia has been accused of assassination attempts beyond its borders.

Decades ago, the Kremlin was blamed for the London assassination of Georgi Markov, a Bulgarian dissident who was killed in 1978 by a dart fired from an umbrella tip and bearing the toxin ricin. His killing remains unsolved.

Earlier this year, an Italian parliamentary commission accused

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Soviet leaders of being involved in the failed plot to kill Pope John Paul II in 1981.

In 2004, a car bomb killed Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev, former Chechen separatist president, in Qatar. Two Russian FSB agents were arrested and convicted in Qatar but later were released after intense diplomatic pressure from Russia. Later that year, pro-Western Ukrainian presidential candidate Viktor Yushchenko was hospitalized with dioxin poisoning, which disfigured his face and nearly killed him. Many fingers pointed at the Kremlin, which had strongly supported Yushchenko's opponent, Viktor Yanukovich (who is now Ukraine's prime minister).

Fifteen years after the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia behaves as though it still calls the shots in the former Soviet republics. This fall, Russia severed diplomatic ties and transport links with Georgia and deported hundreds of Georgians when the former Soviet republic, which is looking to join NATO, expelled four Russians it accused of spying in September. Earlier this year, the Kremlin looked set to cut off natural gas supplies to Ukraine over a pricing dispute before howls of protest from other European countries forced it to back down.

And, as if nothing had changed in the past 15 years, Sergei Ivanov, Russia's defense minister and a former KGB agent, said in an interview with the German magazine Der Spiegel that "we border ... Afghanistan and Iran." Neither of these countries borders Russia, but they do border independent countries that once were part of the Soviet Union.

"It may seem like a trivial thing, but it isn't," said David Satter, a Russia expert affiliated with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and a vocal critic of Putin. "It's part of a psychology that has to be dealt with. This kind of imperial thinking for a country like Russia is just absolutely self-destructive because it eliminates the possibility of a more healthy development."

Satter suggested that the United States could pressure other members of the Group of Eight industrialized nations to expel Russia, which holds the G-8 presidency this year. The G-8 membership is important for Putin, who wants Russia to recover the Soviet Union's status of a global superpower.

"They can make clear their disapproval. They can hold Russia accountable," Satter said.

On Tuesday, British Prime Minister Tony Blair said he would speak to Putin about the Litvinenko case "at any time that is appropriate."

"The police investigation will proceed, and I think people should know that there is no diplomatic or political barrier in the way of that investigation," Blair said.

Anatol Lieven, an expert on Russia at the New America Foundation in Washington, said Britain could put additional pressure on Russia by downgrading its trade and economic links with Russia or even boycotting international events in which Russia is a participant.

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"Putin did not go through all the effort to be the president of the G-8, he did not turn it into a propaganda campaign to have his appearances in the international stage be downgraded by having Britain refusing to turn up," Lieven said. "It could have an effect in stopping them from assassinating critics in the West."

But he said, "I don't think it will have any wider effect."

Lieven, like many other experts, conceded that Europe is increasingly dependent on Russia's gas and oil, and the United States needs Russia as an ally on critical issues, including Iran, North Korea, and global terror.

Such considerations outweigh efforts to persuade Russia to become less like its Soviet predecessor, said Clifford Gaddy, an expert on Russia at the Brookings Institution.

"We have very little leverage," Gaddy said. "If anyone has any leverage, it's the Russians."

E-mail Anna Badkhen at abadkhen@sfgchronicle.com.

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Russian politics

Wishing on a tsar

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MOSCOW

The contest to succeed Vladimir Putin dominates Russian politics

IN THE matter of deciding who will be its next president, as in others, Russia is not a real democracy. Vladimir Putin will nominate his successor like some non-hereditary monarch, and an election will merely validate his choice. But ordinary Russians do play a role: the Kremlin is currently offering them candidates in what is, in effect, a Russian-style informal primary. The "election" is not until early 2008, but the outcome will be known sooner.

The contest is already shaping events in Russia, where all political news is now studied through the refractive lens of the presidential succession. Conspiracy theories, many of which seem outlandish to outsiders, connect everything to the 2008 question: from the murder earlier this month of Anna Politkovskaya, a journalist, to the stand-off with Georgia and occasional purges of the bureaucracy.

When Mr Putin was levered into power by Boris Yeltsin's Kremlin in 1999-2000, he was portrayed as the antithesis of his predecessor: as sober, athletic, and grimly determined to prosecute the bloody war in Chechnya and wipe out terrorists "in the outhouse". Six years on, his likely successors, whom Russia's state-controlled media are heavily promoting, represent contrasting ideas about the country's future.

Dmitry Medvedev, whom Mr Putin last year made a deputy prime minister, suggests a version of Russia as a modern, if troubled state. Mr Medvedev oversees Mr

Putin's so-called national projects, pork-barrel initiatives in health, education, housing and agriculture. In public he talks mostly about domestic problems (albeit not usually the most pressing ones of rampant corruption, lawlessness and violent xenophobia).

The other main contender, Sergei Ivanov, the defence minister (and also a deputy prime minister) embodies a different notion of Russia's future: as a great but embattled imperial power. The recent spy spat with Georgia has boosted Mr Ivanov's profile, though perpetual scandals about corruption and brutality in the armed forces continue to tarnish it. The Kremlin, it seems, wants to influence the whole political spectrum. It is currently creating a new political party, to appeal to left-leaning and nationalist voters, but which will be as loyal as the slavishly dependable parliamentary majority.

Russia may not be a real democracy, but nor, as Dmitri Simes of the Nixon Centre in Washington, DC, says, is it an absolute tyranny. The Kremlin wants to anticipate the public mood, and is testing its candidates and the ideas they embody on television and in opinion polls. At the same time, it is scrambling to ensure that no independent alternative emerges. Visiting Moscow last week, Condoleezza Rice, America's secretary of state, expressed concern about two of the Kremlin's methods: muzzling the media, and the haphaz-

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ard application of a new law that regulates non-governmental organisations. The voting (and counting) will doubtless be closely orchestrated too. Russian liberals are helplessly depressed about their chances of disrupting the coronation.

Yet, for the Kremlin, there are still risks, and one of them is Mr Putin himself. The president's approval rating hovers just below 80%. This "ultra-popularity", says Sergei Markov, a political consultant with Kremlin connections, looks like an asset for 2008: polls suggest that many Russians will vote for whomever Mr Putin tells them to. But some say that if they cannot vote for Mr Putin, they will vote for no one. His imperial style of government—ever the good tsar beset by under-performing ministers—has suppressed the popularity of others. Any successor may lack the clout to cope with a shock, such as a fall in the oil price, on which Russia's economy depends, or renewed mega-terrorism. Mikhail Kasyanov, a former prime minister turned would-be opposition leader, predicts a national crisis following a manipulated election.

Another risk stems from Russia's only real political competition: that among Kremlin factions. What looked like a peaceful transfer of power from Mr Yeltsin to Mr Putin turned out to have victims, in the shape of the Yeltsin-era oligarchs subsequently imprisoned or exiled. So the succession struggle is also a fight for influence, interests and freedom. Lilia Shevtsova, of the Carnegie Moscow Centre, speculates that an unbridgeable split within the elite might yet allow a flamboyant authoritarian challenger to emerge.

Or, more likely, it might encourage Mr Putin to stay in power. That does not necessarily mean changing Russia's constitution to remain in office for a third term, as a bundle of supplications from regional politi-

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Charlemagne

Russia's "near abroad" is becoming Europe's neighbourhood

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Russia's "near abroad" is becoming Europe's neighbourhood



NORTH of the Caspian Sea, Europe seems a world away. The steppe stretches into Asia. A statue of Genghis Khan stands in the region's main town, Uralsk. The Lesser Horde (an administrative division of the Mongol empire) was proclaimed here.

Yet near this statue stands a house where Russia's great poet, Alexander Pushkin, stayed. And through the vast landscape runs the Zhaiyk river, which meanders down from the Urals, Europe's traditional eastern boundary. As you cross westward, the sign on the bridge says simply "Europe"; as you return, "Asia".

Nursultan Nazarbayev, the president of Kazakhstan, says that, if his country ever applied to join the European Union, it would have a better claim than Turkey. That is because more of its territory lies west of the river Zhaiyk than there is Turkish land west of the Bosphorus.

The margins of Europe lend themselves to games about where the continent ends, but they are more than a curiosity. Dealing with Russia and reducing European dependence on its oil and gas has become one of the main preoccupations of the EU. Relations with the Kremlin have become trickier of late. Last week's Russia-EU summit in Finland turned ugly, with Vladimir Putin saying Russia was no more corrupt than Spain, and pointing out that "mafia" is an Italian word, not a Russian one.

It is sometimes thought that Europeans can do little to rein in a petrodollar-fuelled Russia, beyond issuing the occasional mild rebuke. But the EU is not without clout. It may not be able to influence the Russian government's behaviour inside the country, but it can try to limit the consequences outside. It can do this by changing the way it treats the countries sandwiched between itself and Russia—the former Soviet republics that Russia calls its "near abroad" and which the EU calls its "neighbourhood".

The EU has never really had a policy towards its neighbours, except enlargement. So when new members from central Europe joined the club in 2004, Europeans faced an unfamiliar problem: for the first time, they were jostling up against countries that they could not necessarily influence with the inducements of membership, either because they were too big or too un-European. Moreover, these new neighbours were not a relatively coherent group like the ex-communist states of central Europe; they formed an arc of instability from Belarus in the north-east, round the Caucasus and along North Africa to Morocco.

To deal with this motley bunch, the EU invented a "neighbourhood policy". The overall aim was to encourage stability and liberal reform. But this was an umbrella term covering two entirely different groups: countries to the south which would never join the EU and where the main European concerns were immigration and Islamic radicalism; and those to the east, where people thought of themselves as European, wanted policy advice as much as money and believed that they stood a chance of getting into the EU one day. This policy was incoherent, of course. But that did not matter—until recently.

New political forces are at work. One is the emergence of a more assertive, even aggressive, Russia. Now the EU needs to stabilise its eastern neighbours not only for their own sake, but to fend off Russia and diversify away from its energy. The other factor is enlargement fatigue within the union and the public reaction against the prospect of even more countries joining the 25-member club (soon to be 27). This means that countries such as Ukraine no longer believe vague EU hints about eventual membership; they want something more substantial.

Germany is trying to get the EU to offer just that. It wants to change and expand Europe's engagement with the neighbours, by extending bits of the single market eastwards: to Ukraine, to bind it closer to the EU; and even farther east to Kazakhstan, which has one of the ten largest oilfields in the world. The EU's foreign-affairs commissioner, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, is drafting a co-operation agreement with Kazakhstan, in effect claiming Central Asia's largest and most successful country as part of Europe's neighbourhood.

One should not expect too much from all this. It is true that Kazakhstan is potentially an alternative energy provider—but in ten years' time it will probably still be only a potential source. The country is landlocked. Almost all exports go through Russia. A pipeline across the Caspian (skirting Russia) has been mooted but is years from being built. Asked about the EU's role in Central Asia, a former foreign minister from Kyrgyzstan said dismissively: "The EU? We don't know anything about the EU here."

The Ukrainians consider themselves part of Europe, not its fringe. They see even glorified neighbourhood status as a glass half-empty. Yet Russia could react neurotically to EU meddling in what it sees as its backyard. As it has shown repeatedly, the Kremlin is perfectly prepared to use energy prices, and the threat to cut off supplies, as a means of putting political pressure on other countries. It is now trying to slow down Ukraine's membership of the World Trade Organisation.

Hug them close

Does that mean greater EU engagement with its neighbours amounts to a policy of high risk and low reward? Countries on Russia's rim have as much reason to welcome European influence as the Europeans have to seek a role. For almost all of them, the EU is their largest trading partner and they want to reduce dependence on Russia (much more onerous for them than dependence on Russian gas is for the EU). And all, with the possible exception of Georgia, see closer ties with the EU as a way of diversifying risks rather than antagonising Russia.

This is one of those occasions when the EU can be more influential than its constituent parts. Germany, France or Britain can do comparatively little to contain Russian meddling. An EU of 25 and still growing can remind Russia that its "near abroad" is also Europe's neighbourhood.

Face value | The reluctant briber

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A year in the life of an ordinary Russian entrepreneur (who, strangely enough, would rather not be named)



CALL him Ivan. When *The Economist* met him, on a flight from Moscow to Ukraine, Ivan was perplexed. Before the "orange revolution" of 2004, he said, "I knew who, when and how much" to bribe, on behalf of the small minerals company he co-owned in Ukraine. All the new talk of wiping out corruption was making business impossible. Ivan mostly works in Russia, his homeland. He is just the sort of small entrepreneur that the country needs to flourish, if its economy is to rely less on oil and gas, and its society to be stabilised by the growth of a middle class. Ivan has the strong stomach and dark sense of humour needed to survive the everyday perils of doing business in Russia. As he proved in a series of meetings over the last year, he is also enlighteningly candid.

Like many successful Russian businessmen, Ivan, who is in his 50s, had a scientific training, which meant he was not too exposed to Soviet indoctrination. He owes the once unthinkable lifestyle he now enjoys—foreign holidays, overseas education for his children—mostly to his dealings as a commercial-property developer. When *The Economist* saw him next, he was finishing a profitable project near Moscow. It was profitable not only for him. "It's like the last days of Pompeii," he said of the bribe-taking that consumed roughly a tenth of his costs, the same proportion, he said, as criminals extorted in the 1990s.

Ivan's experience is typical: despite theoretical improvements to the registration and tax systems, President Vladimir Putin himself remarked last year that anyone who successfully registered a business in Russia deserved a medal. Vague and overlapping regulations can seem expressly designed to enrich predatory officials. Outright seizures of firms by criminal raiders, usually in cahoots with security or justice officers, are frequent. Ivan's project required dozens of licences, and every licence needed a bribe. Despite new rules that are supposed to restrict them, he faced a procession of bogus inspections by fire, health and other agencies. Mostly, he said, the bureaucrats don't demand cash explicitly; they just procrastinate until it appears.

Ivan's other big problem—labour—is also a money-spinner for corrupt officials. The old system of vocational training, he told *The Economist* six months ago, has collapsed with the Soviet Union; these days, economists are easier to find in Moscow than

manual labourers. Today's Russians, he complained, are only interested in "easy money". Drunkenness is another worry for employers (a common lament, which a new "register of non-drinking men", set up by an entrepreneur, whose members will be vetted by the wives of alcoholics, is intended to address). There is no choice, Ivan says, but to use illegal immigrants and pay off the police. Polls suggest that Russian businessmen fear bureaucrats more than criminals, and dread the police most of all. They charged Ivan 500 roubles (\$19) per month for each of his illegal workers. Still, at least the kickback system is intelligible. Ivan once started a venture in America which ran up against local sanitation rules: "no-one would take a kopeck", and the project folded.

For a while Ivan believed things might be changing for the better at home. The system seemed to offer him discounts for repeat custom: working on a second development in the same town near Moscow, he found that the bribes were lower (though he was also being leaned on to contribute to local schools, a common form of soft extortion). He also thought he might be benefiting from a short-term anti-corruption push. The federal government, he speculated, wanted to show that at least some parts of the country were functioning properly. He believed Mr Putin's regular vows to fight graft.

Meanwhile, the situation in Ukraine was still unpredictable. Ivan doubted that the "orange" government was any less corrupt than its predecessor: "they all say that", he said of the anti-corruption slogans. For the time being, a sort of paralysis had set in among local officials. Almost no bribes were being taken, except the odd bottle of vodka, and nothing was getting done.

Worse before it gets better

By last week, Ivan had turned despondent about Russia too. New people had taken control of the town he was working in. They didn't care, he said, that he had helped to create hundreds of jobs there; they were squeezing him out of the development with exorbitant demands in favour of their pet firms. That disappointment tallies with recent surveys that suggest graft in Russia is actually worsening. Old bureaucrats have found ways around new rules. The periodic firings of disgraced officials have come to seem like the fallout of government infighting, rather than part of a genuine war on corruption. Mr Putin's promises, Ivan has now concluded, are "just paper and words".

Like everything else in Russia's economy, the small-business sector is hard to measure precisely. Though it seems to be growing, obstacles like those Ivan faces are helping to keep it much smaller as a share of employment and GDP than in Western countries. But Ivan, at least, is still optimistic about Russia in the long run. Crooked officials may be as old as Russian literature, but he sees today's rampant corruption as a specifically post-Soviet illness. The Soviet regime bred nihilism among government officials but, he says, the fear that once restrained the worst of it has gone. Pen pushers with small government salaries shamelessly "go to the Canary Islands" on expensive holidays. Yet that mentality will eventually die out as a new generation of people go into business, Ivan believes. He himself regards the methods he is obliged to use with a sort of wry disgust.

Meanwhile, although he no longer wants to do business in Russia, things are returning to normal in Ukraine. The team that ran the country before the revolution is back in power, and Ivan once again knows who, when and how much.

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The Risk Officer will be responsible for the following duties: assist in setting and managing the Fund's risk budget on an ongoing basis; ensure that the Fund evaluates new techniques and opportunities for adding value to the Fund's investments as these emerge over time; set the benchmarks, outperformance targets and risk budgets for the Fund's internal and external managers, and oversee the conduct of performance and risk monitoring to evaluate results achieved against these benchmarks; participate in developing a methodology for a quantitative risk and performance analysis appropriate for the investments of the Fund and oversee the reporting thereof; implement a comprehensive risk monitoring mechanism for the investments and apply and oversee the process; manage the pricing and securities databases and conduct independent performance calculations; perform oversight of quantitative performance measurement and portfolio risk control of internally-managed investments; develop and deliver assessment of portfolio risks of both internally and externally-managed investments to the Chief of Risk and Compliance; manage business continuity programmes.

Candidates should possess the following skills and work experience:

- Demonstrated ability and sound knowledge of investment risk management and performance measurement of investment portfolios.
- Advanced university degree (Master's or equivalent) in Finance, Mathematics, Systems Engineering or Applied Mathematics. A first level university degree with a combination of relevant academic qualifications and experience in portfolio risk management may be accepted in lieu of the advanced degree.
- At least seven years of professional and oversight operational experience working in an investment institution is required. Detailed understanding of risk management and performance measurement concepts of investment portfolios is required. Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) certification is desirable.
- English and French are the working languages of the United Nations Secretariat. For the post, fluency in oral and written English is required. Working knowledge of another official language of the United Nations is desirable.
- Proficiency in portfolio risk analyses and performance attribution models for most asset classes is required. Proficiency in computer, internet and market data applications; i.e., Microsoft Excel, Bloomberg, any GIPS-compliant portfolio risk and performance system is required.

Interested candidates are invited to apply online at <https://www.jobs.un.org>.

Further information about this position and the respective requirements can be obtained at the above website under the occupational group Finance, vacancy announcement number 06-FIN-UNJSPF-411421-R-New York.

Application Deadline: December 25, 2006

Fellowships
A Alfa Fellowship Program
Promoting Understanding of the New Russia

Alfa-Bank and CDS International are pleased to announce a call for applications for the Alfa Fellowship Program's 2007-08 Fellows. Now entering its fifth round, the Alfa Fellowship Program is a professional-level exchange designed to foster a new generation of American leaders and decision-makers with meaningful professional experience in the New Russia.

The Alfa Fellowship begins with language training in the U.S. followed by an intensive language course in Moscow. In October, Alfa Fellows will attend a three-week seminar program with key Russian government, public, and private sector officials to discuss current issues facing Russia. Fellows then undertake individualized professional assignments at leading Russian organizations including private companies, media outlets, think tanks, NGOs, and government institutions.

Eligible candidates must have at least intermediate Russian language proficiency, as well as a graduate degree, and professional experience in business, economics, journalism, law, government, or public policy. The Fellowship includes monthly stipends, related travel costs, housing, and insurance.

Applications must be received by CDS no later than:

December 15, 2006

Program information and application forms can be downloaded from the CDS website at:

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For more information contact:

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New York, NY 10017-1814
Tel: (212) 497-3510
Fax: (212) 497-3535
E-mail: alfa@cdsintl.org
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Kosovo's parliament will declare independence unilaterally. Some, perhaps most, countries will recognise the new state—but others, including Serbia, will not.

Kosovo's Albanians will be happy with this—but they will have a bitter pill to swallow too. The Serb-inhabited north of Kosovo (north Mitrovica and beyond) will ignore independence and continue to operate as it does now—which is, in effect, as part of Serbia. Whether Serbs in the rest of Kosovo then choose to flee depends on what happens. In the long run Mr Kostunica may hope for a formal partition. Some Albanians would like that, but only if they get Albanian-inhabited parts of south Serbia in exchange. Partition, sighs one diplomat, is "the love that dares not speak its name". If Kosovo can be partitioned, why

Ethnic groups in Kosovo

The minorities within the minority

BROD

Kosovo is lived in by others besides dominant Albanians and minority Serbs

HAMDJE SEAPI, a local Gorani official, excuses himself to go to the funeral of a woman from a neighbouring village. He did not really know her, but since her village was all but abandoned in 1999, somebody has to. In his village, Mlike, there were 1,380 people before the Kosovo war, but now there are barely 400, 70% of them over 65. "Before, we were somehow like shock absorbers between Serbs and Albanians, but now we have our backs to the walls."

The Gorani are among the smallest of Kosovo's minorities. Before the war, say officials, anywhere up to 18,000 of them lived in Gora, a rural sliver of land squeezed between Macedonia and Albania. Now a mere 8,000 remain. They are Muslims, living in villages in the remote south and speaking a language close to Serbian and Macedonian. At school they have always been taught in Serbian. Many of them were loyal Serbian citizens, serving in the police and as officials until the end of the war in 1999.

This has incurred much enmity from Kosovo's Albanians. Since 1999 Serbia has continued to pay Gorani teachers like Serbian ones, and they have continued to use the Serbian curriculum. Now the Kosovo authorities want to force them to change. If they did, Gorani children could not go to Serbian secondary schools. Serbia pays its teachers in Kosovo at least twice what the Kosovo authorities do. As a result of this dispute, several hundred Gorani children are now locked out of their schools.

In the village of Brod, locals still burn manure for fuel. Hakija Cuculj, a member of the local council, says that since



the UN took over in Kosovo it has redrawn local boundaries so that Gorani are now outvoted on everything by Albanians. Immediately after the war many Gorani left for Serbia; now they go farther afield. Mr Cuculj's son works in Italy and sends home money. "People are just living in uncertainty," he says. "They just want to survive."

There are no reliable figures for anything in Kosovo. But a rule of thumb is that some 90% of the province's 2m people are Albanians. At least half of the remaining 200,000 are Serbs. The biggest minority after that are local Slav Muslims, many of whom, since 1999, have chosen to identify themselves as Bosniaks (ie, Bosnian Muslims). Then come Roma, some of whom are called Ashkali and some Egyptians; Turks; Gorani; and, finally, a tiny number of Croats. Since the early 1990s most Croats have left, many to settle in places in Croatia from which Serbs have fled. The Gorani are now the smallest of the small.

Ukraine's politics

Up for grabs

KIEV

The birth-pangs of democracy, or an unseemly power struggle?

WHEN Ukraine emerged from the dying Soviet Union there were some, especially in Russia, who said its independence was provisional, and its destiny was to be swallowed up by its neighbours. During the "orange revolution" of 2004, which swept Viktor Yushchenko to Ukraine's presidency, the threat of dismemberment was revived by supporters of Viktor Yanukovich, his Russian-backed rival. That talk has receded, but all else in Ukrainian politics continues to be provisional.

Mr Yanukovich's status as a disgraced election-rigger was temporary. After his party won most seats in parliament last March he again became prime minister, the job he held before the revolution. Other old faces have returned with him. Under new, possibly provisional, constitutional arrangements, the job carries increased powers that overlap with the president's. Oleksandr Chaly, deputy head of the presidential administration, says that all democracies go through transitional periods in which the powers of various arms of government are defined. But in Ukraine the process looks less like constitutional fine-tuning than a revived power struggle.

So far, says a Western diplomat in Kiev, "the prime minister is winning". The constitution makes the president responsible for foreign policy, but that did not stop Mr Yanukovich saying, on a trip to Brussels, that Ukraine's integration into NATO should be delayed. Despite Mr Yushchenko's urgings, parliament is stalling over the legislation needed for Ukraine to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Last week José Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, admitted that neither the European Union nor Ukraine was ready to talk about Ukrainian accession to the EU.

Mr Chaly insists that there are "no strategic differences" between the two Viktor. Yet the course of Western integration that Mr Yushchenko had set may turn out to have been provisional. Mikhail Fradkov, Russia's prime minister, was in Kiev just as a new deal was being reached on Ukraine's gas imports. Ukraine faces a rise in the price of gas it buys from Russia and Turkmenistan in 2007, though not as sharp as it feared. The prospect of a renewed gas crisis, in which supplies to Ukraine could be cut off as they were last January, seems to have been averted.

But the deal is temporary and opaque, and rumours swirl over what concessions



Viktor loses the spoils

the Russians have extracted in return. Mr Fradkov talked of the two countries "synchronising" their WTO bids (the Russians fret that Ukraine might get in before them). Mr Yanukovich mooted the possibility of Russia's Black Sea fleet staying at Sebastopol, its Crimean base, after its lease runs out in 2017. Mr Yushchenko's line, repeated again this week, was that it would have to go. The bigger fear is that Kiev's control of Ukraine's gas-pipeline network may be provisional too.

So might be the uncomfortable cohabitation of the two Viktors. Our Ukraine, the president's party, last month broke off coalition negotiations with Mr Yanukovich's lot—talks that, somewhat incredibly, had been going on ever since March. Several ministers whom Our Ukraine had provisionally nominated to the cabinet have now, tendered their resignations—even though murmurs about restarting the talks are growing louder. Mr Yanukovich's coalition still has a parliamentary majority, but its odd combination of Communists and business tycoons may prove unstable. (Like so many revolutionary alliances, the "orange" team, led by Mr Yushchenko and Yulia Tymoshenko, was purely tactical and has now collapsed.)

Some in Mr Yanukovich's team see Mr Yushchenko himself as a temporary president. He has brought some tough businessmen into his administration. But his popularity is now so low that his chances of winning the next presidential poll, in 2009, look slim. A few crowd-pleasing arrests of corrupt former officials would buoy up his ratings; but it seems that his campaign promises of justice were themselves provisional. Whether the real gains of the revolution—freer media, cleaner elections and competitive politics—prove more lasting remains to be seen. ■

Italy's government

Tantalising

ROME

The centre-left holds on for now; can Silvio Berlusconi?

FOR Silvio Berlusconi it must seem like the torture of Tantalus, whose punishment by the gods was to have food and drink always hovering out of his reach. Ever since he was replaced as prime minister by Romano Prodi after April's election, it has looked as if the new centre-left coalition might disintegrate; and never more so than in the past couple of weeks, as ministers and coalition deputies and senators have fallen to squabbling over the details of next year's budget.

Yet on October 28th Mr Prodi chaired a summit of coalition bigwigs who once again papered over the cracks. There seems now to be a reasonable chance that the centre-left will stay in office at least long enough to complete the stupendously tortuous process of approving an Italian budget—which means until the end of the year. That is bad news for Mr Berlusconi, for it is becoming ever clearer that his chances of regaining office are inversely proportionate to the longevity of the present government.

On October 30th Mr Berlusconi suffered another setback, when a judge in Milan ordered him to stand trial once again on charges of corruption. The latest accusations concern a \$600,000 bribe he allegedly paid to a British lawyer, David Mills, the estranged husband of Britain's culture minister, Tessa Jowell. Mr Berlusconi and 13 others, including Mr Mills, have already been indicted in a related case that is due to come to court later this month. But many Italians accept his protests that he is being victimised by left-wing prosecutors; there is little sign that these two trials will do him any more damage than his previous ones.

His real problem is age. Although he looks younger, partly because of a hair transplant and cosmetic surgery, Mr Berlusconi is now 70. By the scheduled date of the next election, he will be 74. Even in Italy, which has a tradition of geriatric leadership, the thought of the opposition putting up a man who would be 79 by the end of his tenure is daunting. Both of Mr Berlusconi's senior lieutenants, Gianfranco Fini of the National Alliance and Pier Ferdinando Casini of the Union of Christian Democrats, have said as much in recent weeks. If, however, the government can be unseated soon, Italy's richest man could once again become prime minister.

Hence his haste, evident again this week in a decision to call for a demonstra-

tion against the budget in Rome on December 2nd. Mr Berlusconi can expect a big turnout. The draft budget drawn up by the finance minister, Tommaso Padoa-Schioppa, is being modified in response to lobbying by different parties in the coalition. But it is still clear that the Italian middle classes will be hit as never before.

For his part Mr Prodi, who first lost power in 1998 after hard-line Communists had refused to back his government's public-finance policy, is clearly determined not to let it happen again. This week brought another disguised, redistributive tax: a rise in the cost of licence plates for higher-powered cars. This sort of thing is hard for the more centrist elements in Mr Prodi's coalition to swallow. What makes it even harder is the absence of any real attempt to curb the state's notoriously unmanageable spending.

The fragile unity achieved at last weekend's meeting was the product of an undertaking to moderates that, in return for supporting the budget, they would get a pension reform early in the new year. Spending on pensions accounts for almost 15% of GDP. The need for further reform is obvious. Yet the deal, if such it was, was immediately disowned by the two Communist parties in the coalition, on the ground that it was not in the coalition's electoral programme. Their resistance may presage the next big clash within the centre-left—and perhaps Mr Berlusconi's next big opportunity to wrest back power. This one could, however, be his last. ■

FRANCE'S

One year on

PARIS

A grim anniversary, though with relatively little violence

IT WAS not, the government kept insisting, an anniversary. Yet, exactly a year after rioting broke out in France's troubled *banlieues*, the tension of expectations was almost unbearable. In the event, there was no repeat of last year's widespread copycat violence and car-burnings, which lasted for 20 nights. Instead, there was a series of sinister ambushes, many of them on public transport.

A year ago some 10,000 vehicles were torched and 233 public buildings set alight in the *banlieues* across the country. Some 3,200 people were arrested, including many teenagers; 785 were jailed. This time the government put riot police on alert, and urged reporters not to broadcast nightly accounts of car-burnings for fear of provoking even more. During a weekend the government called "rather calm",

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News

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■ Police find polonium
at home, Itsu and hotel

■ Victim acc
of murder fr

Spy poisoned

By Ben Fenton, John Steele
and Duncan Gardham

A RADIATION alert was declared by the Government last night as it was disclosed that a former KGB colonel who died in London had been poisoned by a rare and deadly substance.

Alexander Litvinenko, in his last statement before his death on Thursday night, accused President Vladimir Putin of Russia of being responsible for his murder.

Security chiefs fear that state-sponsored agents were responsible for the death of Mr Litvinenko, whose body was ravaged by polonium 210, a radioactive element rarely used outside military and scientific establishments.

Scientists found a "significant, large" amount in his urine. Traces of polonium were also found in Mr Litvinenko's home and a restaurant and hotel he had visited in London.

If evidence of Russian involvement emerges, it threatens to plunge relations between London and Moscow to the kind of low last seen during the Cold War.

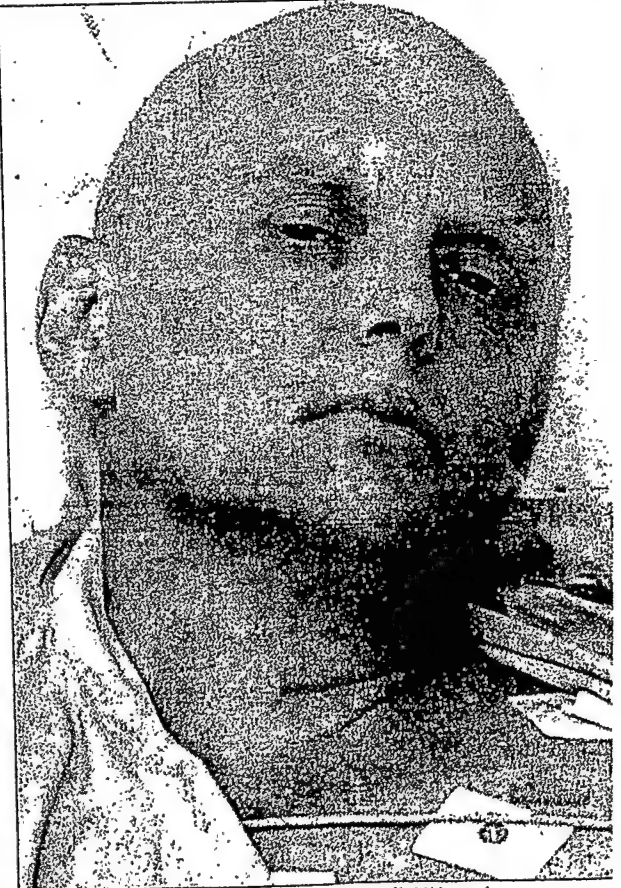
Security chiefs are alarmed at the possibility that Russia may be prepared to strike at critics abroad with little care for its public image.

Scotland Yard stopped short of confirming a murder inquiry but the affair is causing increasing alarm.

The Government's Cobra security committee met several times throughout Thursday night and yesterday.

John Reid, the Home Secretary, chaired a meeting at lunchtime, after which the Government took the extraordinary step of asking the chiefs of its Health Protection Agency (HPA) to hold a news conference to reassure the public about polonium 210 risks.

The HPA chief executive, Prof Pat Troop, said the finding of polonium in Mr Litvinenko's body was "unprecedented". Such poisoning had never been seen



Alexander Litvinenko lies dying in a London hospital this week

in Britain and the HPA knew of no other case around the world.

But she insisted it was not dangerous to the wider public and would only be lethal if it was ingested or breathed in.

Scotland Yard sources said a "major operation" had been launched to check for traces of polonium 210 at five London locations - a sushi restaurant and a hotel bar, where Mr Litvinenko met associates on Nov 1; his home in Muswell Hill; and two hospitals. Last

night, it was confirmed that traces were found at the Itsu restaurant in Piccadilly, the Millennium Hotel, Grosvenor Square, and at Mr Litvinenko's home. Cordons were set up.

Police are working with Government nuclear scientists and it is unclear when a post mortem examination of Mr Litvinenko's body will be allowed. Specialists from the Government weapons laboratory at Porton Down confirmed that "monumental doses" of polonium were

found in people who with Mr I fell ill on I wife, Mari his family hotel staff will be spc

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President Vladimir Putin said yesterday 'This was not a violent death'

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silencing one man, but the
howl of protest from around
the world will reverberate, Mr
Putin, in your ears for the rest
of your life."
"May God forgive you for
what you have done, not only
to me, but to beloved Russia
and its people."
Walter Litvinenko said: "My
son was killed by a little tiny

nuclear bomb. But the people
who killed him have big
nuclear bombs and those peo-
ple should not be trusted."
"He was very courageous
when he met his death and I
am proud of my son. Marina
[his wife] and Sasha [Alexan-
der] were so happy in London,
but the long hand of Moscow
got them here on this soil."
The Daily Telegraph can dis-
close that Mr Litvinenko told
two academic interviewers this
year that he was trained by the
KGB and was second in com-

mand of a unit that committed
"extra-legal killings".
Mr Putin said: "As far as I
understand from the medical
statement, it does not say this
was the result of violence, this
was not a violent death."
"There's no grounds for
speculation of this kind. I
hope the British authorities
would not contribute to insti-
gating political scandal: it has
nothing to do with reality."
Death of a spy: Pages 4 & 5
Editorial Comment: Page 27

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The sinister death of Alexander Litvinenko has unveiled the shadowy world of 'Londongrad' – a melting pot of dissidents, defectors and billionaire oligarchs. Geoffrey Wansell investigates

It bears all the hallmarks of a classic spy novel written at the height of the Cold War; two mysterious Russians in a central London hotel – one inevitably known only as Vladimir – a plausible but enigmatic Italian professor, the poisoning of a former lieutenant colonel in the KGB who had become a prominent critic of Putin's Russia and a chilling death-bed speech.

But this was not a novel by John le Carré. This was painfully, heart-rendingly real, as anyone who saw the haunting face of former KGB officer Alexander Litvinenko staring from his bed in intensive care in the days before his death this week knows only too well.

That this was fact and not fiction, however, has not made the facts any easier to unravel. Twist after bizarre twist, the tragic story of Litvinenko's demise has compelled and confused in equal measure. His defiant dying words, whispered to friend Andrei Nekrasov – "The bastards got me, they won't get us all" – has also left fellow defectors

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feeling unnervingly closer to home.

For if a plot watched by the FSB Russian intelligence services in Moscow to kill a defector in London, the message would seem to be clear: no exile is safe.

The Foreign Office has asked Moscow for any information that would assist Scotland Yard with their inquiries into the death of Mr Litvinenko. Russians in London believe they are wasting their time. They accuse the Kremlin of murder. As indeed did Mr Litvinenko in an extraordinary statement delivered last night from beyond the grave. Dictated earlier this week from his hospital bed, the former spy blamed the Russian president for his death.

"You may succeed in silencing one man but the howls of protest from around the world will reverberate, Mr Putin, in your ears for the rest of your life," he said. "May God forgive you for what you have done, not only to me, but to beloved Russia and its people."

President Putin dismissed claims that his government was connected with Mr Litvinenko's death, saying that although the incident was a "tragedy", he had seen no definitive proof that it was a "violent death". Those who are familiar with the effects of Polonium-210, the highly radioactive and toxic substance that was last night revealed to have been found in Mr Litvinenko's body, could probably furnish Mr Putin with an unpleasant enough description.

None the less, the questions surrounding Mr Litvinenko's death may always outnumber the answers. We are still learning about his meeting at the Millenium hotel in Grosvenor Square on November 1 with former KGB colleague



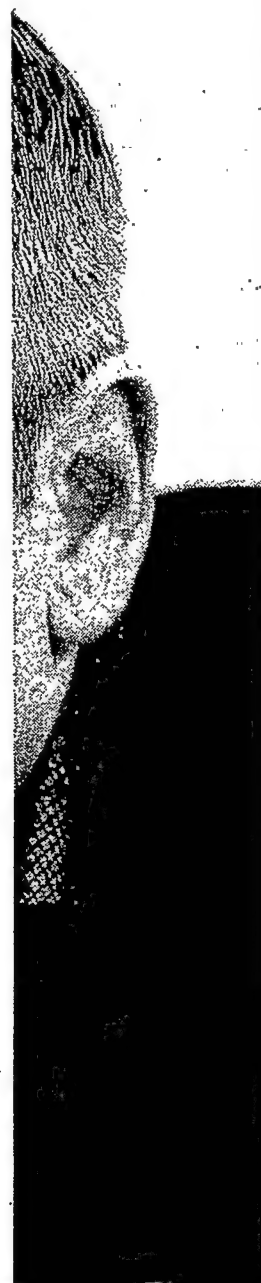
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DMITRY BELIAKOV



I'm not Vladimir, says the third man

**By Adrian Blomfield
In Moscow**

A RUSSIAN originally identified as the mysterious "Vladimir" who met Alexander Litvinenko for afternoon tea the day he fell ill denied involvement in the defector's death yesterday.

Previously described as a figure who was "tall" and "taciturn" and who offered Mr Litvinenko tea, Dmitry Kovtun told *The Daily Telegraph* that he was both baffled and angry by attempts to link him to the poisoning.

In his first interview, he said the meeting at the Millennium Hotel in Grosvenor Square was supposed to be about business but they talked mainly about the weather and dogs.

"I'm known always as Dmitry, never as Vladimir," said Mr Kovtun.

"I don't believe Alexander could have called me Vladimir. Even his family knew my name.

"I'm not vicious. I'm not taciturn and note that I haven't offered you tea."

Mr Kovtun said Mr Litvinenko joined him and Andrei Lugovoi, their business associate, in the hotel lobby, having just arrived from lunch in Piccadilly with his Italian contact.

"I had ordered gin for myself and green tea," said Mr Kovtun. "Andrei was also having liquor. Then

something but I can't remember if he drank anything or not."

A further meeting had been planned for the following day so there was little talk about business. They talked about the weather and Mr Kovtun's Irish wolfhound before they parted.

It was the last time that Mr Kovtun saw Mr Litvinenko. The following morning the defector called Mr Lugovoi to cancel their meeting, saying he was ill and had spent the night vomiting.

Last night it appeared increasingly unlikely that either Mr Kovtun, 41, or the Mr Lugovoi, 40, a former KGB officer, were involved in the murder after evidence emerged suggesting that Mr Litvinenko had already been poisoned by the time he met them on Nov 1.

If that is the case, why was so much innuendo directed at the two Russians, including that Mr Lugovoi now worked for the Kremlin?

Did Mr Litvinenko, as was claimed by his friend Alex Goldfarb, ever name a man called Vladimir as a possible suspect?

Vyacheslav Sokolenko, a business partner of Mr Lugovoi, was at the hotel at the time and matches the description. He denies having anything to do with the poisoning and is not a suspect.

Last night, Mr Sokolenko said he met Mr Litvinenko in the hotel lobby. "We

Litvinenko's name not mentioned as EU meets Putin

By Toby Helm
and Christopher Hope

THE Foreign Office asked Moscow last night to hand over any information it has that could help British police investigate the death of Alexander Litvinenko as they trod a diplomat tightrope with Russia.

While officials said the situation was "now more serious" following the dissident's death, they were anxious not to put further public statements on record that could inflame already tense relations between the two countries.

At a European Union meeting in Helsinki attended by Vladimir Putin, the Russian president, there was an even more eerie silence from the European side as Mr Litvinenko's death went unmentioned in six hours of talks.

As well as tensions over human rights, Britain and the EU are in the midst of demanding that Russia opens its gas and oil markets to western European countries. They also want assurances that there will be no repeat of last winter's decision by the Kremlin to turn off gas supplies to Ukraine, causing tur-

moil in European markets. Economic wrangling and human rights tensions have combined to fuel the tension.

The decisions by London to grant asylum to outspoken critics of the Putin regime including Mr Litvinenko, his multi-billionaire friend Boris Berezovsky and Akhmed Zakayev, a Chechen separatist have not helped curry favour with Moscow.

A decision by Cherie Blair, the Prime Minister's wife, to promise to help human rights organisations pursue legal challenges against draconian restrictions on their work in Russia made the Kremlin bristle.

Mr Blair has kept away from mud slinging, preferring behind-the-scenes activity by his diplomats to commenting through the media.

He even refused to tackle Mr Putin at an EU summit last month over the killing of the investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya. She was a prominent Putin critic and her death was being investigated by Mr Litvinenko.

The main worry for Mr Blair is the thorny issue of how to replace Britain's rapidly diminishing oil and gas reserves.

Last year the UK became a

net importer of gas for the first time, throwing into sharp relief its likely reliance on the Russian state-owned gas company Gazprom for its gas in coming years

Energy was at the top of the agenda at the Helsinki summit with Mr Putin invited to a gala dinner during which EU leaders got little change from him.

The UK Government is known to be wary of Gazprom, the world's biggest supplier of natural gas, which entered the British market in June by buying a Leeds gas business for an undisclosed sum.

The company has been repeatedly linked with making a bid for Centrica, Britain's biggest domestic gas supplier which owns British Gas. Such a move could force ministers to intervene.

The particular concern is Moscow's repeated use of gas supply as a political weapon.

Earlier this month the Kremlin doubled the price of gas in Georgia. Although Gazprom said the price was still subject to negotiation, no former Soviet state paid nearly as much for its gas.

The United States has accused Moscow of using energy resources to "blackmail" former Soviet states that pursued a pro-western course.

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Scotland Yard veterans will head poison inquiry

By John Steele
Crime Correspondent

THE investigation into the death of Alexander Litvinenko is being led by the senior Scotland Yard officer who has, for the last four years, headed inquiries into Islamic fundamentalist terrorism.

Deputy Assistant Commissioner Peter Clarke and his colleagues have for some time feared that Jihadi terrorists would try to attack Britain with a device containing "chemical, biological radiological or nuclear" material (CBRN).

Instead, their first experience of a CBRN substance has come with the death of the former KGB colonel, who is now believed to have died from poisoning by radioactive polonium 210 in an affair which carries echoes on a Cold War era, when the Soviet block, rather than al-Qa'eda,

was thought to be the threat to world peace.

Some of Mr Clarke's veteran officers, however, may be in their element with the new Russian inquiry.

Specialist Operations (SO) 15, the Metropolitan Police Counter-Terrorism Command, which has more than 1,000 officers in its overall strength of around 1,500, is a recent combination of the anti-terrorist branch and Special Branch, which worked alongside MI5 in combating Russian espionage.

An inquiry such as the Litvinenko poisoning would always have been dealt with by Specialist Operations, which handles cases which may involved political violence.

Detectives, though, rarely work alone and SO regularly calls on an array of experts, including explosives specialists, in its cases. This is more

true than ever in the Litvinenko case.

In the days after the inquiry came to the Metropolitan Police, on Thursday 16 Nov, amid fears that he had been poisoned with thallium, it consulted a specialist poisons unit at Ray's Hospital in central London, as well as doctors treating him in University College Hospital.

However, once suspicions began to emerge about a radiological link, their attention shifted to two agencies – the Atomic Weapons Establishment in Aldermaston, Berks, and Porton Down, Wilts, the Government's Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, a facility for military research, including "CBRN defence."

It is understood that work by these agencies led police to be able to indicate that polonium 210 had been present in Mr Litvinenko's body.

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ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

Former Russian intelligence officer who castigated the Kremlin and who died as mysteriously as he had lived

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AP/ALISTAIR FULLER

ALEXANDER LITVINENKO, the former Russian intelligence officer who died on Thursday aged 44, had lived for six years in exile in Britain, where he was a vociferous critic of President Vladimir Putin; his death – apparently caused by an unidentified poison – was interpreted in some quarters as a political assassination ordered by the Kremlin.

Moscow strongly denied the charge, but Litvinenko himself was in no doubt, accusing his former political masters from his hospital bed during the three weeks in which he lay gravely ill. Others speculated that a rogue element of the former KGB was responsible, or members of Russia's extensive organised crime network; both theories could be made to sound plausible given the trajectory of Litvinenko's career in his native country.

The son of a doctor, Alexander Valterovich Litvinenko was born in the Russian city of Voronezh on August 30 1962. After leaving school in 1980 he was drafted into the Soviet Army as a private, but rapidly rose through the ranks to lieutenant-colonel. In 1988 he joined the KGB, working in counter-intelligence. His next posting was to a unit, working jointly with the Moscow police, established to combat organised crime.

When the KGB became the FSB (the Federal Security Service) Litvinenko was appointed deputy head of 7th Section, responsible for investigating corruption within the service. According

to Litvinenko, his masters ordered the killing of Boris Berezovsky, the billionaire "oligarch" who was then Secretary of the Security Council and was close to President Boris Yeltsin.

In 1998 Litvinenko went public with this claim, and was dismissed from the FSB (then headed by Vladimir Putin). He was subsequently arrested twice on what he said were false charges – and they were later dropped. In 1999 he spent nine months in prison, charged with abusing his office, before being acquitted.

Later, while in exile in London, Litvinenko claimed: "I was given illegal orders linked to the kidnapping and murder of people. When we did not execute these orders, they began to persecute us. Criminal cases against me were opened. I was offered a higher post in exchange for my silence. I have written 15 reports detailing these abuses, which are with me in Britain."

Arrested for a third time in 2000 on charges of faking evidence in an investigation, Litvinenko fled before he could be imprisoned. Despite not having a passport, he managed to reach Turkey, where he was joined by his wife, Marina, and their son, Anatoly, who had left Moscow on tourist visas.

In November that year the family arrived in Britain, where they claimed political asylum. Initially they lived in Kensington, but after his wife had been frightened by an unexplained visit from some "heavies" MI5 moved them to a secret address in north



Litvinenko: he criticised Russia's policy towards Chechnya

London. Far from maintaining a low profile in Britain, however, Litvinenko became a trenchant and vehement critic of President Putin, and particularly of Russia's policy towards Chechnya. In his book *Blowing up Russia: Terror from Within* (2002), Litvinenko alleged that it was

the FSB which was behind the apartment block bombing in Russia in 1999 that killed more than 300 people – the Russian government had blamed the outrage on Chechen separatists.

He further alleged (in an interview with a Polish newspaper in 2005) that al-

Qa'eda leaders had been trained by the FSB in Dagestan in 1998.

On October 19 this year Litvinenko was in the audience at a meeting at the Frontline Club for journalists. When the discussion turned to the murder in Moscow, 12 days earlier, of the Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya, he rose to his feet and blamed the Russian government.

The authorities in Moscow did not ignore Litvinenko. In 2002 a summons was delivered through his letter-box in London, ordering him to return to Russia to face trial on corruption charges. Naturally he did not go. "The case against me is lies from beginning to end," he said. "And from a moral point of view this is not a trial but a ritual." He was given, *in absentia*, a three-and-a-half-year jail sentence.

Litvinenko did not doubt that his public pronouncements placed him in danger. He kept his address secret and regularly changed his e-mail identity and telephone number, often making it difficult for friends to keep in touch; he also insisted on meeting contacts in public places. Even so, he was prepared to take considerable risks: not long ago he travelled to Georgia to meet contacts whom he hoped would further his investigations.

Litvinenko and his family were supported entirely by Boris Berezovsky, himself now living in exile in London. For the publication in 2002 of Litvinenko's book,

Blowing Up Russia, Berezovsky financed a press conference in Whitehall. It was organised by the well-known publicist Lord Bell, and some 50 journalists were flown in from Moscow, as well as a couple of widows of victims of the Moscow apartment block bombing. It is thought that the event cost Berezovsky more than £500,000.

Litvinenko suddenly fell ill on November 1. He had had lunch at a sushi restaurant in Piccadilly with an Italian acquaintance who claimed to have information about the killing of Politkovskaya; earlier that day he had met two Russians at a London hotel.

Following a deterioration of his condition on November 20 Litvinenko was moved into intensive care. He died three days later.

Alexander Litvinenko was a man both earnest and intense. Unusually for a Russian, he abstained from alcohol, preferring to drink water or cola.

Last month he was granted British citizenship, but his English was poor and he had little social life. As a young man he had been a talented athlete, specialising in the pentathlon. In Russia he and his wife were known for the excellence of their ballroom dancing, and they continued to pursue this interest in Britain; while performing the tango or the rumba Litvinenko could show considerable animation.

His wife and son survive him.

Final interview of the pc

DEATH may have silenced Alexander Litvinenko late on Thursday night but his testimony lives on, most dramatically in a series of interviews he gave to two academics from the University of Westminster this year.

For six hours, most recently in the Hilton Hotel on Park Lane, Mr Litvinenko shared the story of his life with Julia Svetlichnaja and James Heartfield, from his birth in the Russian provinces to exile in London.

Theirs was the last proper interview he gave before his mysterious death and it throws a new light on his past and, quite possibly, his fate.

THE epitaph for Alexander Litvinenko might read "he was caught up in events bigger than he understood".

This ordinary boy from Voronezh never shone at school, did not go to university and ended up in the KGB only via his national service in the Soviet army.

But by the time his life ended, apparently the victim of radioactive poisoning, he was a disillusioned exile in London, a defector who seemed unable to plan for the future and whose conversation often darted from one subject to another in bewildering fashion.

Among his closest friends was an exiled Chechen leader, his neighbour in Finchley, and he admitted that Boris Berezovsky, another exile but a former Kremlin kingmaker, had supported him financially. "Is this a crime?" he asked.

The subject that caused him to lose his temper was that of his former employer – and also of Mr Putin – the FSB, Russia's internal security service and formerly known as the KGB. Criminals and gangsters, he called them.

It was not always thus. The young Litvinenko had been flattered to be recruited into the Soviet-era KGB. A promising young officer working in counter-intelligence, he was soon promoted and moved into the more prestigious field of counter-terrorism and the fight against organised crime.

The early 1990s were a turbulent period for the KGB. Communism collapsed and with it everything the KGB held most



Alexander Litvinenko pictured in London in 2000 with his wife Marina. He said he fled to Britain after refusing

move with the times, and it was determined to dominate the new Russian market economy, just as it had the old Soviet Union.

Its tactics were ruthless and Litvinenko was expected to show no qualms about achieving its aims. One was to protect and even recruit potential businessmen for the new Russia. Protecting them meant getting rid of their rivals.

Now in his 30s, he was responsible for recruiting murderers. He would play on their psychological weakness to win them over.

"So if somebody was the victim of a crime, like his daughter was raped, you would offer to let them take revenge on the perpetrator," he told us in the kitchen of his home earlier this year. "This was how we recruited killers."

Now, too, he made his first real acquaintance with the Chechens, a tough people from the North

players in the new Russian economy. Litvinenko both cooperated with them and was involved in the campaign to cut them down to size when they were perceived as a threat.

Increasingly, his department focused on "solving" problems. For example, as a favour to a senior former colleague in debt to moneylenders, he was told to arrest the creditors and execute them. Officially, this was justified as part of the struggle against separatists.

By the mid-90s a new class of "oligarchs" was seizing control of the country's main assets, especially its oil and gas, and becoming fabulously wealthy. Litvinenko was becoming more and more involved in settling scores for his masters.

"Our department worked on the so-called 'problem principle': the government had a problem and

said. One target he was ordered to destroy was another security officer who had blown the whistle on some of the FSB's nefarious activities, Mikhail Trepashkin. Another target he was told to kidnap to trade for FSB officers taken hostage by Chechens was a prominent Chechen businessman based in Moscow.

By 1997 his department, ostensibly in charge of the fight against organised crime, was, in his words, "responsible for illegal punishments or so-called extra-legal executions of 'unsuitable' businessmen, politicians and other public figures. In parallel, the department blackmailed the same targets for funds."

In our many hours of conversation with Litvinenko he did not strike us as one given to introspection, or even capable of analysing his own motives or actions. But when he was told to



Interviewers James and Julia

'The Litvinenkos'
home was always
hospitable. He was
very proud of his son'

to carry out an FSB order to kill

powerful — and most controversial — business men, Boris Berezovsky, something changed.

"When I got the order to kill Boris Berezovsky, I was told that the reason was that he had too much money and too much power," he recalled.

We asked Litvinenko why he disobeyed that order. He refused to elaborate.

"People ask me what is my relationship with Berezovsky," he said. "Yes, we are friends and he helped me financially, for which I am grateful."

Once a patron of Mr Putin, Mr Berezovsky is now an exile in the UK, one the Kremlin would like to extradite to Russia for trial on alleged fraud charges, which he denies.

From his new home Mr Berezovsky wages an active political struggle against his former protégé. But Litvinenko told him to temper his rhetoric

and warned him of the likely consequences if he failed to do so. "I warned him recently that he cannot talk about changing the political regime in Russia by force but he ignores me," he said. "They will get him. He is not careful enough."

By defying the FSB leaders, Litvinenko set in motion events which led to his fleeing to Britain.

He was arrested for supposedly leaking classified information in 1999, released in court but immediately taken into custody before being freed on parole. It was then that he made his escape, via Turkey, to Britain. Mr Berezovsky, he said, had promised to help him settle him in the West.

He published a book about the mysterious bombings of Russian blocks of flats that helped provoke the Chechen war of 1999. But once he had revealed the inner workings of the FSB and was no

longer part of the system, he was useful to Mr Putin's critics was over.

He lived a curious "afterlife" among his fellow countrymen abroad. His Finchley home, he told us, was bought for him by Mr Berezovsky but more recently relations between the two had cooled. He was also more and more frustrated that the world was not listening to his story.

Bizarrely, he even became an ally of the local Chechen diaspora, one that in Moscow he had viciously persecuted in the 1990s for the FSB.

"Wasn't Alexander one of those who was involved in killing the Chechens?" we asked Akhmed Zakayev, the former actor and now Chechen foreign minister-in-exile, when we all met in the bar at the Park Lane Hilton.

"Yes, but he is our friend now", Mr Zakayev replied. Litvinenko beamed.

In the end this former FSB enforcer was just an ordinary Soviet soldier who had risen through the ranks, far beyond his natural abilities, and into a world which took brutal advantage of him.

The Litvinenkos' home was always very hospitable. His wife, Marina, would serve tea before discreetly leaving the room. Alexander was extremely proud of his young son and how well he was settling in England. He was good at judo, like his father.

His stories were full of extravagant conspiracies, hardly surprising when he had lived in the middle of so many. He was hoping to earn a living as an intelligence analyst, hinting that he was privy to the secrets behind many big scandals, some of them from as long ago as the Cold War.

We talked to Litvinenko to pursue our academic research into Chechens in Moscow. But he always wanted to return to the subject of the conspiracies that fascinated him. Eventually, one of those conspiracies caught up with him.

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Russian spy's father pays moving tribute to his son
telegraph.co.uk/news

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The West is losing patience with Putin

There is, as yet, no evidence linking the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko to the Kremlin. While many commentators believe that there is a connection – the former spy had been consorting with exiled opponents of the Putin regime – hearsay does not constitute proof. We do not know for sure that Mr Litvinenko was murdered and, if he was, the deed may have been done by his ex-KGB colleagues acting without higher authority. It is important to make this qualification because, if Mr Litvinenko was indeed assassinated on the orders of the Russian state, the consequences will be huge. We are talking, after all, about a man living under the Queen's peace. When one government deliberately uses lethal force in another's jurisdiction, it commits an act of terrorism – arguably of war. Libya and Sudan were bombed in retaliation for such incursions, Afghanistan occupied:

Vladimir Putin's regime is not, of course, in the same category as those of Gaddafi, Omar Bashir or the Taliban. But it is showing increasingly autocratic tendencies. Opposition figures are jailed on pretexts. Independent television stations have been virtually eliminated. Just weeks ago, a respected journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, was gunned down in broad daylight after criticising the president. Abroad, too, Mr Putin is throwing his weight about, meddling in Ukraine and in the dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan. He is conducting a bestial war against Chechen separatism, but is happy to sponsor South Ossetian separatism in Georgia.

Why this new-found swagger? Because Russia is suddenly, as Mr Putin likes to remind us, "an energy superpower". His defence minister is even more direct: "In the contemporary world, only power is respected." Perhaps. But, in any commercial transaction, power lies ultimately with the customer – in this case, Western Europe. Until now, the West has tended to overlook Mr Putin's authoritarianism, largely for the sake of a quiet life. But there must come a point when our patience runs out. It is one thing to tyrannise your people; quite another to presume to do so on British territory.

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The Sunday Times

November 19, 2006

Poisoned: spy who quit Russia for Britain

DAVID LEPPARD

SCOTLAND YARD is investigating a suspected plot to assassinate a former Russian spy in Britain by poisoning him with thallium, the deadly metal.

DATE: 07-15-2010

CLASSIFIED BY 60322 UCLP/PLJ/JN

REASON: 1.4 (C)

DECLASSIFY ON: 07-15-2035

Aleksander Litvinenko, who defected to Britain six years ago, is fighting for his life in a London hospital. A toxicology test at Guy's hospital last Thursday confirmed the presence of the odourless, tasteless poison.

A medical report obtained by The Sunday Times shows that he has three times the maximum limit in his body, a potentially fatal dose. It is as yet unclear how the poison was administered, but on the day he became ill his family say he had a meal with a mysterious Italian contact.

Friends of Litvinenko, a former lieutenant-colonel in Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB), are convinced that he is the victim of a murder attempt by former colleagues. They regard it as similar to the plot in which Georgi Markov, the Bulgarian dissident, was killed in 1978 with a poison-tipped umbrella on Waterloo Bridge in London.

Scotland Yard detectives have been liaising with consultants at Barnet hospital, north London, who have been treating Litvinenko since the poisoning on November 1, the anniversary of his defection.

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A police spokesman confirmed an inquiry had been launched last week: "The Specialist Crime Directorate are investigating a suspicious poisoning."

Supplies of thallium in Britain are highly restricted and cases of poisoning are extremely rare. One gram is enough to kill even the fittest of men and Litvinenko, 43, has all the symptoms of the poison, which can be diagnosed only after at least two weeks.

He has kidney damage, is constantly vomiting and has lost all his hair. He has also suffered severe damage to his bone marrow and an almost total loss of white blood cells which are vital to the immune system.

Doctors say these latter symptoms could suggest the presence of a second unknown agent in a potentially lethal "cocktail".

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In an interview last week at his bedside in the cancer ward of Barnet hospital, where he was being treated under a different name, Litvinenko said he believed it was a murder plot to avenge his

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<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/printFriendly/0,,1-523-2460129-524,00.html>

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defection.

"They probably thought I would be dead from heart failure by the third day," he said. "I do feel very bad. I've never felt like this before — like my life is hanging on the ropes."

Litvinenko claimed political asylum in 2000 and was granted British citizenship last month. One of the highest profile defectors from the FSB, he is on the wanted list in Moscow where he has made powerful enemies with his criticism of President Vladimir Putin.

Last month Litvinenko received an unexpected e-mail from a man he knew as Mario, an acquaintance he had made in Italy. The Italian said he wanted to meet him in London because he had some important information about the murder of Anna Politkovskaya, a Russian investigative journalist who was killed in the lift of her Moscow apartment block.

Continued on page 2...

Litvinenko was a friend of Politkovskaya, one of the Kremlin's most powerful critics, particularly over the war in Chechnya.

"We met at Piccadilly Circus," said Litvinenko. "Mario said he wanted to sit down to talk to me, so I suggested we go to a Japanese restaurant nearby.

"I ordered lunch but he ate nothing. He appeared to be very nervous. He handed me a four-page document which he said he wanted me to read right away. It contained a list of names of people, including FSB officers, who were purported to be connected with the journalist's murder.

"The document was an e-mail but it was not an official document. I couldn't understand why he had to come all the way to London to give it to me. He could have e-mailed it to me."

After the meeting the Italian had simply "disappeared", although Litvinenko emphasised that he was not in a position to accuse him of involvement in his poisoning.

That night Litvinenko became violently ill. His wife Marina, 44, said: "At first I thought it was just a bug but then he started vomiting. But it wasn't normal vomiting."

She said her husband is a fit man who often runs three miles a day. He had no previous record of medical problems. He was admitted to Barnet hospital on the third day. Nine days ago, his condition suddenly deteriorated and he lost all his hair. Doctors say Litvinenko has not eaten for 18 days and is receiving what little nourishment he can take via an intravenous drip.

Russian and East European agents have a history of using poisons to attack their enemies. Markov was poisoned with ricin and died three days later.

More recently Victor Yushenko suffered facial disfigurement after being poisoned with suspected dioxin as he campaigned for the presidency of Ukraine.

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Litvinenko, a specialist in fighting organised crime, came to prominence in 1998 after he accused the Russian authorities of trying to kill Boris Berezovsky, a tycoon close to Boris Yeltsin, who was then president.

He claims he was drummed out of the spy agency and subjected to harassment to punish him for speaking out. He was arrested twice on what he says were trumped up charges. Although he was acquitted, he spent months in Moscow prisons.

In 2000 he was arrested for a third time on charges of faking evidence in an investigation. Friends told him he was unlikely to escape lightly under the Putin regime.

Litvinenko decided to flee before he was arrested. Stripped by the authorities of his passport, he ended up in Turkey where he joined Marina and their son Anatoly, who had flown from Moscow on tourist visas. They came to Britain and claimed asylum. He has been a thorn in Moscow's side ever since.

Marina said she was hoping to find a bone marrow donor to save her husband's life.

Doctors have moved him to another hospital offering more specialised treatment and police have taken his family into protective custody.

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REASON: 1.4 (C)
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Friend of Poisoned Ex-KGB Spy Gives Authorities Name of Suspect He Believes Orchestrated Murder

Monday, December 04, 2006

FOX NEWS

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LONDON — Britain's senior law and order official said an inquiry into the death of a poisoned ex-KGB spy had expanded overseas, specifically Moscow, Russia, and a United States-based friend of the former agent said he had given police the name of a suspect he believes orchestrated his killing.

"The truth is, we have an act of international terrorism on our hands. I happen to believe I know who is behind the death of my friend Sasha (Litvinenko) and the reason for his murder," Yuri Shvets said in an exclusive interview Sunday with the AP by telephone from the United States.

Shvets, also a former KGB officer, said he had known ex-Soviet spy Alexander Litvinenko, who died in London after he was exposed to a rare radioactive element, since 2002 and had spoken to him on Nov. 23, the day he died.

• FOX EXCLUSIVE: 'I Bought Nuke Poison, And You Can Too!'

He said he was questioned by Scotland Yard officers and an FBI agent in Washington last week. A police official in London, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the case, confirmed officers had interviewed Shvets.

The official also said police expected to travel to Moscow within days, where a team of nine officers planned to interview several people, including Andrei Lugovoi, another former spy who met Litvinenko on Nov. 1 — the day he fell ill.

Andrei Lugovoi, a former KGB agent turned millionaire entrepreneur, is believed to be among five men the police want to meet. He made three trips to London from October 16 and met Mr Litvinenko four times in the days before the latter was fatally poisoned with polonium-210.

Mr Lugovoi told The Times of London of sharing drinks and dining with Mr Litvinenko, including a meal they had in October at the same Piccadilly sushi bar where detectives believe the Russian dissident was poisoned on November 1.

The two men first met in 1997 when Mr Lugovoi went to work for a television station run by the exiled billionaire Boris Berezovsky. Mr Berezovsky, who is now based in London, also employed Mr Litvinenko.

Security sources say that Mr Lugovoi is reported to retain close contacts within Russia's Federal Security Service, the FSB.

Mr Lugovoi denies involvement in Litvinenko's death, and said that he would welcome the chance to clear his name.

Traces of polonium-210 have been found at two Mayfair hotels in which Mr Lugovoi stayed and where he entertained Mr Litvinenko, as well as on a British Airways plane on which he travelled.

He also visited the West End office of Mr Berezovsky, another contaminated site. Mr Lugovoi was one of the last people to talk to the 43-year-old dissident before he collapsed on the night of November 1 at his home in Muswell Hill,

http://www.foxnews.com/printer_friendly_story/0,3566,234095,00.html

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North London.

• **Putin Angry With Britain for Not Quieting Ex-Russian Spy on Deathbed**

Home Secretary John Reid said Sunday the inquiry was expanding outside of Britain and would go wherever "the police take it."

Shvets declined to confirm the name of the person he had told police he believed was behind Litvinenko's death, or to offer details of a document he said he had given to the British officers.

"This is first-hand information; this is not gossip. I gave them the first hand information that I have," Shvets told the AP.

He said he was not prepared to disclose further details, because of concern he could disrupt the inquiry.

"I want this inquiry to get to the bottom of it. Otherwise they will be killing people all over the world — in London, in Washington and in other places," Shvets said. "I want to give the police the time and space to crack this case, to allow them to find those behind this assassination, the last thing I want to do is give a warning to those who are responsible."

Shvets told the AP he had met Litvinenko in 2002, when both men were investigating incidents in the Ukraine. He said Litvinenko had introduced him to Mario Scaramella, an Italian security consultant. Scaramella met Litvinenko at a central London sushi bar on Nov. 1 and has since been hospitalized.

At the **Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies** in Washington, the former agent has spoken about his past as a KGB spy.

Shvets, who lives in Washington, said he was currently away from his home and in the U.S. on vacation, but would not confirm his precise location because of concern for his safety.

"I want to survive until the time we have a criminal case in relation to Sasha's death brought before a court in London," Shvets told the AP.

In a separate statement issued through Tom Mangold, a London-based former **British Broadcasting Corp.** reporter and friend for 15 years, Shvets denied claims published Sunday in Britain's Observer newspaper that he had been involved in the drafting of a dossier on Russian oil company Yukos.

Former Yukos shareholder Leonid Nevzlin, a Russian exile living in Israel, told the AP last week that Litvinenko had given him a document related to Yukos and said he believed the agent's killing was tied to his investigations into the company.

Mangold said Shvets had denied the newspaper report, which said he had examined charges filed by Russian prosecutors against Yukos officials and shareholders, handing his findings to Litvinenko.

Sunday night, Alex Goldfarb, a close friend of the victim, revealed that on his death bed Mr Litvinenko voiced his suspicions about the former FSB agent. Mr Goldfarb said yesterday that his friend did not want to publicise details of his encounters with Mr Lugovoi and some of his associates, in the hope that he would recover and lure these men back to London when he was better.

Mr Lugovoi and two business colleagues, Dmitri Kovtun and Vyacheslav Sokolenko, were in London on November 1 to watch CSKA Moscow play Arsenal in a Champions League tie. All three met Mr Litvinenko before the game at the Millennium Hotel, in Grosvenor Square. Police are investigating whether the football match was used as a cover by those involved in the poison plot to come to London.

Mr Lugovoi says that he has been in touch with Scotland Yard and is looking forward to having the opportunity to clear his name. At the weekend he suggested that he and his colleagues were being framed to draw police away from the real perpetrators, whose identity he says he does not know.

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Mr Lugovoi claimed that he and his wife and children had all tested positive for low-level exposure to polonium-210, the rare radioactive substance found in Litvinenko's body before he died in London. Results of a post mortem examination on the 43-year-old's body are expected later this week. Lugovoi says the poisoner may have tried to kill him as well.

His Pershin company, with interests in private security, soft drinks and wine, is said to be worth £100 million, raising questions about why such a successful executive would be involved in such an affair.

There are reports that Tony Blair is concerned about the diplomatic damage with Moscow. President Putin is furious at the continuing allegations of the Kremlin's involvement in the Litvinenko affair.

The Moscow link was reinforced over the weekend by reports that British officials had questioned another former Kremlin spy now in hiding in Washington.

The latest theory to emerge is that he was planning to blackmail several wealthy Russians about their private lives and business dealings.

Scaramella was undergoing hospital tests Sunday after he showed lower levels of polonium-210. University College Hospital in a statement he was well and showing no external symptoms.

In an interview with Italy's RAI TG1 evening television news, Scaramella said doctors had told him that his body contains five times the dose of polonium-210 considered deadly. "So my mood isn't the best," he told the channel.

At their sushi bar meeting, Scaramella told Litvinenko an e-mail he received from a source named the purported killers of Russian investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down on Oct. 7 at her Moscow apartment building. The e-mail reportedly said that he and Litvinenko — a friend of the reporter — were also on the hit list.

Litvinenko reported feeling unwell on Nov. 1 and died three weeks later, his body withered, his hair fallen out and his organs ravaged.

Britain's Health Protection Agency said Sunday a total of 27 people have now been referred for tests for possible radiation exposure.

Reid planned to discuss the case Monday at a meeting of European interior ministers in Brussels.

Goldfarb said Litvinenko's funeral is expected to take place in London, but due to the levels of radiation in his body, the coffin will be sealed.

Britain's Sunday Times newspaper quoted Lugovoi on Sunday as saying he had also been contaminated with polonium-210, a claim contradicted by a report in Russia's Kommersant newspaper on Saturday.

Lugovoi was quoted as telling the Russian newspaper he and his family had tested for traces of radiation and been passed as "absolutely clean."

He denied that he and two business associates, Dmitri Kovtun and Vyacheslav Sokolenko, who met Litvinenko together on Nov. 1, were involved in Litvinenko's death.

"We suspect that someone has been trying to frame us," the Sunday Times quoted Lugovoi as saying. "Someone passed this stuff onto us ... to point the finger at us and distract the police." He did not say whether he had fallen ill.

Repeated attempts by the AP to reach Lugovoi in Moscow through his business associate, Vyacheslav Sokolenko, have been unsuccessful.

The Times of London and the Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Litvinenko's Business Contact Denies Role in Poisoning Plot

Created: 24.11.2006 17:04 MSK (GMT +3), Updated: 16:39 MSK
MosNews

DATE: 07-15-2010
CLASSIFIED BY 60322 UCLP/PLJ/JN
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Andrei Lugovoi, the former Federal Security Service of Russia (FSB) operative and the businessman now reported by the Western media to be linked to the poisoning and death in the UK of his former colleague Alexander Litvinenko, refuted those allegations in an exclusive interview to **Russia Today**.

"Since Alexander died in the hospital I would like to express my condolences and sympathy to his family. This is a great tragedy for Alexander's family and all who knew him. That's why my opinion corresponds to what I've just said," Lugovoi mentioned.

He described the nature of his relations with Litvinenko. "We knew each other about 10 years before he moved to London. We were just acquaintances and did not maintain any personal or business relations. We had a period where we did not see each other and roughly a year ago he called me from London and asked whether I would visit London and I accepted the invitation as I have certain interests in London.

"He proposed to meet as he had an offer to make that he said could interest me. We met and he helped to establish business relations with several respected British companies. I gave their names to the British embassy to make the situation as transparent as possible. Over the past 12 months we met each other solely to discuss business matters since I was conducting dialogue with the British companies interested in investments in Russia. We negotiated an agreement about certain consulting on the matters in Russia," Mr Lugovoi said.

He found nothing special in Litvinenko's behavior during the meeting on November 1. "There were no signs he was ill, he was quite optimistic and behaved as usual. I did not notice anything special which drew attention. The meeting on November 1 in a London Millennium Mayfair hotel was rather short — no longer than 20-30 min and was not confidential. It was on Litvinenko's initiative and I even asked to shift it to November 2. I was in London for a single purpose to show the city to my family. I was in the UK also with my two business partners Vyacheslav Sokolenko and Dmitry Kovtun to attend a football game CSKA vs Arsenal and to rest. That's it," the Russian businessman added.

He refrained from speculating on Litvinenko's death. "It's a complicated question. I'd be very careful with any statements since the subject is very sensitive. The investigation can actually answer the question of what really happened. There should be proper diagnostics and checks which either proves the poisoning or not. The developments around Alexander within the last three weeks as far as his health deterioration is concerned are very strange, but I'm really surprised with the hysterical attempts to link me up to the events around Alexander," Lugovoi pointed out.

He dismissed the allegations in the Western media concerning his involvement. "After November 1 I was in London for 2 more days and did not go away suddenly as it was reported in the Western media. Secondly, we agreed with Alexander to meet each other in November in Madrid, where I planned a vacation with my wife. As Alexander learnt it he told me he knows a Spanish businessman

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interested in establishing contacts in Russia. He asked me to meet that man.

"Litvinenko and I agreed to contact each other to discuss the details. I called him on November 7 and he told me he felt sick, as if he had been poisoned. And one more thing — he called me up in London on my mobile phone on November 2 at 20-00 and asked to postpone the planned meeting. Then he called me in the evening and we agreed to stay in touch.

On November 7 we had a phone conversation and he told me he had been unconscious for two days and then felt better and hopes to be discharged soon. His wife Marina was present during the conversation. We agreed to have a conversation in a week. I called him on November 13 after first publications where he claimed to have been poisoned and I declared my sympathy to him. I told him I will probably be in Spain in November, exactly November 23, but he replied his condition had deteriorated and he will not be able to meet me and perhaps we will meet in December. All the people around him knew we met on November 1 and had calm conversations on November 2, 7 and 13. Last time we agreed to call each other in a week," Lugovoi explained.

He said he demonstrated a transparent position on Litvinenko's case and continues to stay in contact with the UK authorities.

"I returned to Russia on November 20 late in the evening. My friends called me and told me my name is mentioned in connection with this case. I rushed to the office, looked through the Internet. Next day I contacted the UK embassy and asked for a meeting to clarify the situation and possibly help the investigation and demonstrate the transparency of my position taking into account the fact I have business interests in the UK and my partners there have business interests in Russia.

"We agreed to meet on Thursday at 2 pm. I was there with Dmitry Kovtun who purely by accident was present at the meeting with Litvinenko on November 1. We exchanged views with UK representatives and agreed to meet the British police and clarify the situation. We had another conversation today and I expect the information on the procedure — will it be in the UK or the police officials will come here. I will also seek the advice of my lawyer. Immediately after the meeting in the UK embassy I contacted the media to represent my view as I consider any statements before such a meeting incorrect. Now I'm free to comment and open for contact," Russian businessman concluded.

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Friend says he knows who poisoned former Soviet spy

NEW: U.S.-based friend says he knows why ex-agent was murdered
 •Investigators travel to Washington; others set to go to Moscow
 •Italian man who met with Litvinenko still being tested for impact of radiation

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LONDON, England (AP) — A U.S.-based friend of a poisoned former Soviet KGB agent said he had given police the name of a suspect he believes orchestrated the killing of Alexander Litvinenko.

"The truth is, we have an act of international terrorism on our hands. I happen to believe I know who is behind the death of my friend Sasha (Litvinenko) and the reason for his murder," Yuri Shvets said in an exclusive interview with the AP by telephone from the United States.

Shvets, also a former KGB officer, said he had known Litvinenko, who died in London after he was exposed to a rare radioactive element, since 2002 and had spoken to him on November 23, the day he died.

He said he was questioned by Scotland Yard officers and an FBI agent in Washington last week. A police official in London, speaking on condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the case, confirmed officers had interviewed Shvets.

The official also said police expected to travel to Moscow within days, where a team of nine officers planned to interview several people, including Andrei Lugovoi, another former spy who met Litvinenko on November 1 — the day he fell ill.

Home Secretary John Reid said Sunday the inquiry was expanding outside of Britain and would go wherever "the police take it."

Shvets declined to confirm the name of the person he had told police he believed was behind Litvinenko's death, or to offer details of a document he said he had given to the British officers.

"This is first hand information, this is not gossip. I gave them the first hand information that I have," Shvets told the AP.

He said he was not prepared to disclose further details, because of concern he could disrupt the inquiry.

"I want this inquiry to get to the bottom of it, otherwise they will be killing people all over the world — in London, in Washington and in other places," Shvets said. "I want to give the police the time and space to crack this case, to allow them to find those behind this assassination, the last thing I want to do is give a warning to those who are responsible."

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Shvets told the AP he had met Litvinenko in 2002, when both men were investigating incidents in the Ukraine. He said Litvinenko had introduced him to Mario Scaramella, an Italian security consultant. Scaramella met Litvinenko at a central London sushi bar on November 1 and has since been hospitalized. (Watch Scaramella say how he told spy they were both on a secret hit list)

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At the Center for Counterintelligence and Security Studies, in Washington, the former agent has spoken about his past as a KGB spy.

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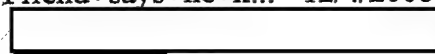
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Shvets, who lives in Washington, said he was away from his home and in the U.S. on vacation, but would not confirm his precise location because of concern for his safety.

"I want to survive until the time we have a criminal case in relation to Sasha's death brought before a court in London," Shvets told the AP.

In a separate statement issued through Tom Mangold, a London-based former British Broadcasting Corp. reporter and friend for 15 years, Shvets denied claims published Sunday in Britain's Observer newspaper that he had been involved in the drafting of a dossier on Russian oil company Yukos.

Former Yukos shareholder Leonid Nevzlin, a Russian exile living in Israel, told the AP last week that Litvinenko had given him a document related to Yukos and said he believed the agent's killing was tied to his investigations into the company.

Mangold said Shvets had denied the newspaper report, which said he had examined charges filed by Russian prosecutors against Yukos officials and shareholders, handing his findings to Litvinenko.

Toxicologists found polonium-210, a rare radioactive substance, in Litvinenko's body before he died in London. Results of a post mortem examination on the 43-year-old's body are expected later this week.

Scaramella was undergoing hospital tests Sunday after he showed lower levels of the same radioactive substance. University College Hospital in a statement he was well and showing no external symptoms.

In an interview with Italy's RAI TG1 evening television news Scaramella said doctors had told him that his body contains five times the dose of polonium-210 considered deadly. "So my mood isn't the best," he told the channel. (Watch scientists working with polonium in a lab)

At their sushi bar meeting, Scaramella told Litvinenko an e-mail he received from a source named the purported killers of Russian investigative journalist Anna Politkovskaya, who was gunned down on October 7 at her Moscow apartment building. The e-mail reportedly said that he and Litvinenko -- a friend of the reporter -- were also on the hit list.

Litvinenko reported feeling unwell on November 1 and died three weeks later, his body withered, his hair fallen out and his organs ravaged.

Britain's Health Protection Agency said Sunday 27 people have now been referred for tests for possible radiation exposure. (Watch why British officials say there is no threat to public health)

Reid planned to discuss the case Monday at a meeting of European interior ministers in Brussels.

Litvinenko's funeral is expected to take place in London, but because of the levels of radiation in his body, the coffin will be sealed, Litvinenko's friend Alex Goldfarb said.

Britain's Sunday Times newspaper quoted Lugovoi on Sunday as saying he had also been contaminated with polonium-210, a claim contradicted by a report in Russia's Kommersant newspaper on Saturday.

Lugovoi was quoted as telling the Russian newspaper he and his family had tested for traces of radiation and been passed as "absolutely clean."

He denied that he and two business associates, Dmitri Kovtun and Vyacheslav Sokolenko, who met Litvinenko together on November 1, were involved in Litvinenko's death.

"We suspect that someone has been trying to frame us," the Sunday Times quoted Lugovoi as saying. "Someone passed this stuff onto us ... to point the finger at us and distract the police." He did not say whether he had fallen ill.

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Advertisement

Russian Authorities Investigate Spy's Death

Sarah Mendelson

Senior Fellow, Russia and Eurasia Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies

Friday, December 8, 2006: 1:15 PM

Sarah Mendelson, senior fellow at the Russia and Eurasia Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies, was online **Friday, Dec. 8 at 1:15 p.m. ET** to discuss the investigation into the death of former Russian spy **Alexander Litvinenko**. The Kremlin has denied accusations that it murdered the outspoken critic, who was investigating the October shooting death of journalist **Anna Politkovskaya**. Russian and British authorities are both involved in the increasingly complicated case, questioning witnesses who met with Litvinenko before his death. **Dmitry Kovtun**, who met with him Nov. 1, has also been hospitalized.

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The transcript follows.

Chevy Chase, Md.: Do you think critics that say Russia is becoming increasingly more like the old Soviet Union have validity?

Sarah Mendelson: In Russia today, we see a lot of legacies from the Soviet era that have gone unchecked, and that is cause for concern. Specifically, we see a tendency to want a strong leader, we see more rule of man than rule of law, we see a lack of tolerance and growing xenophobia, and a tolerance for corruption. Russia today is different than the Soviet Union, but whatever small steps toward democracy made in the 1990s have mostly been negated. The 1990s brought a lot of chaos and poverty for some, but it also saw independent media, development of NGOs, political parties, elections and other institutions we associate with democracy.

Sadly, the lack of addressing the legacies from the past is something that a lot of us skipped over. In a survey I conducted with Ted Gerber from the Univ of Wisconsin and with the Levada Analytic Center in 2005, we found 56% of young Russians thought Stalin did more good than bad. How do we talk about a modern Russia, a Russia that is firmly part of the Euro-Atlantic community, if even the young people think this? So, not the Soviet Union, but we do see the rise of illiberal nationalists and this is cause for real concern.

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Washington, D.C.: Any comment about Litvinenko's conversion to Islam on his death bed? What message does that send to all us?

Sarah Mendelson: There are conflicting reports on this; it seems he did convert but it also seems that he was quite ill at the time. It is of course an intensely personal issue and difficult to speculate what is going through the mind of a person who may or may not know he is dying. But it would be important for us to know more about his relation to Islam before he fell ill. Was he thinking of doing this before? Perhaps only his family knows. I am reluctant to read a larger political statement into this as your question suggests. The world becomes quite small when one is nearing the end and making a political statement seems to me far from anyone's intention.

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Perhaps the hospital in London can shed some light on this at some point. It would be important to know what his medical condition was at the exact time this occurred.

Sarasota, Fla.: It's obvious that this was an assassination, but do you think the clumsy incompetence of it was intended?

Sarah Mendelson: The UK police have called it a murder. For now, since the facts are relatively murky, and there is so much speculation surrounding it all, I would like to treat your question also as speculative.

I have heard some argue that the clumsiness was intentional. This is suggested in the Wash Post op-ed today in fact.

But we have also seen an assassination by Russian agents of the Chechen Yanderbiev in Qatar in I believe 2004 which was also quite clumsy -- in the sense that the agents rented a car in Qatar and used their actual names apparently, allowing local officials to track them down and tie them to the explosion that killed Yanderbiev. So on the one hand, it does seem one would not like a covert operation to be done this way. On the other hand, we have seen some clumsy operations that were presumably meant to be covert.

I would add just that there are so many dots that need to be connected that we should really pause before making any definitive statements. In fact, sometimes it feels to me that we think we know a "dot" and in fact it is not one. This may be one of the great unsolved mysteries.

Melbourne, Australia: Killing someone by radioactively poisoning them isn't subtle. Why would whoever killed Litvinenko murder him in such a high profile way, thereby drawing the attention of the world and prompting the British government to investigate? What ramifications will this investigation have on British and Russian relations?

Sarah Mendelson: Quickly on your questions and then some commentary: perhaps a dramatic murder sends messages? Perhaps it will have a chilling effect? In terms of the specific effects on UK-Russian relationship, there is little that one can see that will be positive. In early 2006, the Russians accused the British government of double hatting a development expert as a spy - someone who was in charge of grants to very reputable human rights organizations. And the relationship has already been strained because high profile Chechens have gained political asylum (through the courts) in the UK and the Russians would like these people extradited. We are likely to see more strain. Some of the best intelligence and police work in the world (Mi5 and Scotland Yard) are running an investigation in a place where rule of man rules. And where the local government, that is Russia, is not clear to help out.

And let's remember: There have been a number of high profile unsolved murders in the last few years. You are right that the world seems to focus on these things for a while and then moves on. We saw this with the murders of over 300 children and their parents in Beslan. Attention of the world public to any issue is short lived.

So we need to keep in mind the issues that Litvinenko was alleged to have been working on (Russian journalist Anna Politkovskaya's murder) and the fact that he had in writing accused the Russian

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government of purposely blowing up apartment buildings in Russia in 1999 where some other 300 people were killed in their sleep - something that the Russian government blamed on Chechens and used as a reason to begin the second war there in October 1999. Note then, that the crime scenes were cleared within days of the explosions - making it hard for both the Russian government and for Litvinenko to have hard evidence of who did this.

But the attention of the world in some ways seems riveted because of the James Bond aspects - former spy poisoned in London with many possible motives for killing him. There is something almost mythic or epic about it. But he was connected to very real, tragic events in Russia and it is important to remember them.

Houston, Tex.: If this is acceptable trade craft, shouldn't we reexamine our casting of Russia as an ally?

Sarah Mendelson: We should reexamine our casting of Russia as an ally based on an established record of undermining the rule of law. We should be very focused on how the Russian government has handled dissent and the prevalence of torture and abuse. We don't need murders in London to rethink the relationship.

In fact, before this murder, there was some discussion within the US government at various levels about the relationship. Russian actions on a range of issues have made this alliance very difficult.

Chevy Chase, Md.: Is it true that Litvinenko was never actually a spy?

Sarah Mendelson: I do not believe this is true. Everything I have seen and read suggests he was indeed working for the FSB. He accused his employer of corruption and that brought on several problems for him.

College Park, Md.: What exactly should the U.S. be doing to bring about greater freedom, democracy, and liberalization in Russia?

Sarah Mendelson: Very hard and important question.

First, we as a nation must be compliant with various human rights norms and laws ourselves. We need to restore our own inspirational powers, if you will.

Second, on a very practical level, the USG along with European states and private donors can do a great deal to support Russian human rights defenders. In surveys I have overseen we found the Russian public was in fact supportive of foreign assistance for 1. health issues,; 2. environmental issues and 3. human rights. So we should not shy away from supporting those who are speaking in favor of rights or actually working. We can support efforts at strategic litigation in international courts, such as the European Court of Human Rights of which Russia is a part.

Instead, the USG appears to be cutting budgets for democracy and human rights in Russia in the next fiscal year. This is not a good policy. This should be reversed.

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The US and Europe should also be much better coordinated on our efforts, and we should draw in fact on survey data about how Russians think about many of these issues to try and help make the lives of Russians better. These should not be seen as foreign concepts - but things that Russians want. For example, 94% of Russians want the prosecution of officers who tolerate hazing. This is a fundamental right - not to be tortured. Let's help those who are working on this issue inside Russia.

Savannah, Ga.: Now you refer to Litvinenko as a former spy. It would seem that his background in Russia would be particularly relevant to sorting out who might have killed him. I'm sure MI5 and Scotland Yard are looking into it. Once again: For which Russian intelligence agency did Litvinenko work and how senior was he?

Sarah Mendelson: The FSB. I don't know what his rank was.

Arlington, Va.: Before we judge Russia's youth for their generous assessment of Stalin, let's remember that it was during his reign that Russia/USSR emerged from a second-rate, semi-industrial backwater to become a global superpower that was able to fight off the most advanced European state basically on its own devices. Of course he had committed terrible crimes. But don't we in the US have "generally positive" views of political leaders who promoted the slave trade, conducted genocidal policies against American Indians, opened fire on striking workers, interred Japanese-American citizens.

Sarah Mendelson: Every country has a contentious past and every country needs to examine its past. In our country our democracy has been strengthened when we have begun to deal with these legacies. True for South Africa, for Chile, for Argentina.

In Russia, I am talking about teaching critical history texts in schools about the GULAG, about the millions who perished, about a system that swallowed its own and used them as slave labor. This is a critical aspect of the Soviet and Stalinist past that needs to be addressed. Instead, Putin has overseen a state educational agency that has censored texts on the past.

So in short, because we have not addressed our own past fully, does not mean we should advocate others bury their pasts - especially when our pasts are shared as in WWII. I think this issue of historical legacy and social development will be increasingly seen as important. In legal circles it already is: that is what the transitional justice movement is about. Truth and reconciliation.

Germantown, Md.: Will the U.S. and U.K. governments have enough courage to take a moral stand and point out to Putin that his authoritarian rule (no direct elections, etc.) is unacceptable? Corruption and murder are results of that. And then freeze secret Swiss bank accounts of his cronies. Is this realistic?

Sarah Mendelson: Not clear. There have been many times when the international community has barely responded to evidence of crimes against humanity (see the HRW report from March 2005 on Chechnya and the lack of international response). Alas, I see this as evidence of ambivalence about human rights.

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But your point is important: there is some international leverage and it is access to the green stuff. Russians do want access to bank accounts overseas.

Woodbridge, Va.: Does the illness of Dmitry Kovtun appear to be from secondary exposure to radiation? Is it suspected that he was deliberately poisoned, as well? Or, more likely, is it too soon to tell?

Sarah Mendelson: Too soon to tell. Was he delivering the poison and was himself poisoned? was he the murdered because he knows something? too soon to tell.

Arlington, Va.: What people seem not to pay attention to is the fact that radioactive substance got into the wrong/right hands. I thought U.S. and Russia had agreements under the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons/cooperative threat reduction that established joint controls over the safety on nuclear equipment. How was it possible that polonium was smuggled from some secret Russian atomic institute? What is more disturbing is If this IS NOT a Kremlin operation. That means that nuclear materials are accessible to terrorist master minds and this is some bad piece of news for the U.S.

Sarah Mendelson: I agree and I think we need to stay on this. Securing these materials is vital to US national security interest. Period. I find it especially sobering if we step back from the James Bond aspect of this all and realize we have witnessed a radiological event - murder - in a western city.

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Investigation Of Spy's Death Finds Radiation On 2 Jetliners

By KEVIN SULLIVAN and PETER FINN
Washington Post Foreign Service

LONDON, Nov. 29 — British authorities investigating the death of former Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko have discovered low levels of radiation on two British Airways jetliners, prompting the airline to ground the planes and issue warnings to as many as 33,000 passengers who traveled in the past month on those aircraft and on a third plane grounded in Moscow, company officials said Wednesday.

Airline officials said "the risk to public health is low" from contamination found on the Boeing 767 planes, but they urged passengers to call Britain's National Health Service or their doctors if they have symptoms or want information. Health officials have said the radioactive material that killed Litvinenko, called polonium-210, would have to be ingested or inhaled to be dangerous.

All three affected planes flew on the London-Moscow route, but they also made a total of more than 220 flights that landed in Barcelona; Athens; Stockholm; Vienna; Istanbul; Madrid; Larnaca, Cyprus; and the German cities of Dusseldorf and Frankfurt, airline officials said. The airline posted on its Web site, www.britishairways.com, a full list of flights made by the grounded aircraft dating back to Oct. 25.

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Russia urges UK to extradite tycoon for coup talk

04/13/2007 11:27 GMT

By Christian Lowe

MOSCOW (Reuters) - Russia urged Britain to strip Russian billionaire Boris Berezovsky of his refugee status on Friday after he told a British newspaper he was planning a revolution to topple President Vladimir Putin.

Berezovsky took his long-running battle with the Kremlin to a new level by saying, in an interview with the Guardian newspaper, that he was fomenting revolution. "We need to use force to change this regime," he said.



His statement quickly rebounded on Russia's relations with Britain, already strained by accusations from London-based dissidents including Berezovsky that the Kremlin was behind the poisoning death of ex-Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko.

"The main thing it seems to me is that he has put the British authorities and the British justice system in an awkward position," Kremlin deputy spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on the Vesti-24 television channel.

"We have heard open calls for the forceful overthrow of power in another state ... from the lips of a person who was given political asylum in a court ruling. Logic dictates that such statements should lead to a review of that decision."

Russia has for years been trying to extradite Berezovsky from his base in London to face corruption charges at home but has been foiled because of his refugee status.

Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov told a news conference: "It is a question for the British authorities. They know perfectly well what this person is up to."

Prosecutor-General Yuri Chaika said he had ordered a criminal investigation over Berezovsky's remarks, though the tycoon is outside Russia's jurisdiction.

"I've already given an instruction to the relevant authorities to open a criminal case," Chaika said in televised remarks.

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WORLD NEWS

THE WASHINGTON POST

Investigation of Spy's Death Finds Radiation on 2 British Airliners

BRITAIN, From AP

The radiation found on the planes is an important new clue for investigators who are trying to solve an extraordinary case that has caused political tensions between London and Moscow. It may help determine where the polonium-210 came from as detectives follow the trail of the radioactive substance.

Airline officials said they acted at the request of government officials who are investigating the mysterious death last week of Litvinenko, 43. His family and friends have alleged that he was murdered, but police have said only that his death is "suspicious."

Ireland, vomiting and then losing consciousness for three hours, according to his spokesman.

Gaidar's daughter, Maria Gaidar, said that the incident had posed a serious threat to her father's life but that his condition was improving. He was transferred from Dublin to a Moscow hospital on Sunday.

Doctors have not identified the cause of the illness and are considering the possibility that Gaidar, 50, might have been poisoned, his spokesman said. Gaidar became ill in the afternoon.

Gaidar fell ill at a university just outside Dublin where he was answering questions about a new book he had written. He has been a critic of Putin's policies, particularly the increasing of state control over important sectors of the economy.

Valery Natarov, the spokesman for Gaidar, told news agencies here that "nobody has ruled out the poisoning version. It is being considered, and doctors are studying all the symptoms and consequences to cure Yegor and diagnose the

causes."

A close colleague of Gaidar's, Anatoly Chubais, a deputy prime minister under Russian President Boris Yeltsin and now the head of the country's state electric company, said that Gaidar was "on the verge of death" Friday and that the symptoms did not appear to be the result of a natural illness.

Russian officials have argued Litvinenko's death stemmed from an overseas plot by disaffected exiles to discredit Putin, not an order issued by the Kremlin.

Gaidar, who served as acting prime minister under Yeltsin from June to December 1992, was one of the architects of the post-Soviet transition to a market economy. He was later reviled by many Russians who blamed him for their impoverishment during a time when favored tycoons enriched themselves from the privatization of state assets.

Finn reported from Moscow. Correspondent Mary Jordan in London contributed to this report.



Yegor Gaidar, former acting Russian prime minister, became ill last week in Ireland. His spokesman said poisoning hasn't been ruled out.

Traces of radiation have also been found at Litvinenko's London home, as well as a central London restaurant, a hotel and two offices that he visited Nov. 1, the day he fell violently ill.

Litvinenko's supporters allege that he was killed on orders from Russian President Vladimir Putin, an assertion that Kremlin officials have labeled nonsense. British Prime Minister Tony Blair on Tuesday called Litvinenko's death "a very serious matter" and said, "We are determined to find out what happened and who is responsible."

It was unclear Wednesday night whether police suspect that polonium-210 was carried into Britain aboard one of the planes or whether they think that people who had been contaminated by it left the country aboard one of them, or both.

Former KGB agent Andrei Lugovoy and two other Russian men who met with Litvinenko at the Millennium Hotel bar in Grosvenor Square on Nov. 1 later returned to Moscow. Police said traces of radiation were found at the hotel bar, which has been closed to the public.

Since the Litvinenko investigation started, more than 1,100 people have called a help line for those worried over possible exposure to the radioactive substance, health officials said. Eight people showing some symptoms were referred for further tests.

The two planes on which radiation had been detected were grounded at Heathrow Airport on Tuesday evening and a third remained on the ground in Moscow awaiting radiation testing, an airline spokeswoman said. A company spokesman said British Airways employees were attempting to reach all of the estimated 33,000 people who traveled on those planes, mainly by telephone and e-mail.

British Airways has also set up special telephone numbers, listed on its Web site, for people to call to determine whether they were on one of the planes in question.

Nancy McKinley of the International Airline Passengers Association in Dallas said the large number of passengers and flights involved over a relatively short time period illustrate the complexity of issues involved with airline security.

"This shows that you can't look at this industry without thinking about the global implications," she said.

In Moscow, officials reported that another prominent Russian had suddenly fallen ill. Former acting prime minister Yegor Gaidar became sick Friday at a conference in

U.N. Official Calls Violence in Darfur 'Horrific'

Rebuke Follows Rights Council's Rejection of Measure Seeking Prosecutions by Sudan

By NORA BOUSTANY
Washington Post Foreign Service

Atrocities in the Darfur region of Sudan are occurring daily at a "horrific" level, the top U.N. human rights official said yesterday, adding that countries in the region were "in denial" about the situation.

The U.N. high commissioner for human rights, Louise Arbour, told a U.N. Human Rights Council meeting in Geneva that the Sudanese government and an allied militia

Council rejected a resolution from European countries and Canada calling on Sudan to prosecute those responsible for the violence. The council instead adopted a resolution urging all parties involved in the conflict to "put an immediate end to the ongoing violations" with a special focus on "vulnerable groups."

The conflict began in early 2003 when rebels rose up against the government, which responded by arming and supporting the Janjaweed,

on Darfur for such a long time."

"They obviously do not meet the raped women and the abused civilians. They do not see the true picture," Egeland said.

Meanwhile, the U.N. humanitarian coordinator in Sudan, Manuel Aranda da Silva, said in Khartoum, the Sudanese capital, that the forced departure of a Norwegian relief organization from Darfur this month had left 300,000 people without support.

Norway's Deputy Foreign Minister

people.

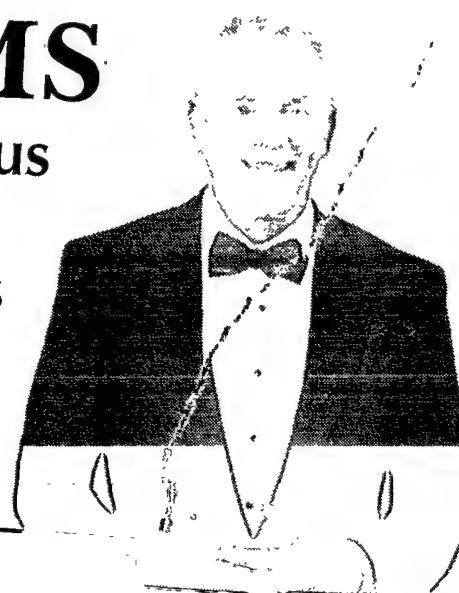
Conditions in Darfur were now "very serious," said Johansen, who has traveled to the region twice.

The Norwegian Refugee Council left Darfur on Nov. 10. Sudanese authorities said the group falsely reported 80 rapes outside a camp in South Darfur and accused it of espionage for reporting on Sudanese military movements, according to the Reuters news agency.

"The NRC's management of the camp in southern Darfur, the big-

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SAFE HAVEN

The Kremlin believes Britain is providing the 61-year-old Berezovsky with a safe haven and platform from which to conduct a campaign against Putin and his policies.

Berezovsky was at the centre of allegations, angrily denied by the Kremlin, that Putin played a part in Litvinenko's death in London last November. Berezovsky was a pall-bearer at Litvinenko's funeral.

The majority of Russian voters back Putin and have no appetite for revolution, but Berezovsky's comments are also likely to raise the political temperature inside Russia in the run-up to parliamentary elections in December and a presidential vote in 2008.

A coalition of Putin opponents is planning to defy a police ban by staging a protest rally in Moscow. Kremlin loyalists have accused the coalition of fomenting extremism and receiving foreign funding, though they say they want only peaceful change.

In his interview, Berezovsky said: "There is no chance of regime change through democratic elections," Berezovsky said.

The businessman said he was offering his "experience and ideology" to his contacts in Russia's political elite, adding: "There are also practical steps which I am doing now, and mostly it is financial."

Asked if he was effectively fomenting a revolution, he said: "You are absolutely correct."

A mathematician who made a fortune from business deals in the economic free-for-all that followed the collapse of Soviet rule, Berezovsky played a part in bringing Putin to power in 2000. But he later fell out with Putin and fled to Britain when a criminal investigation was opened into his business dealings.

Russian prosecutors have applied to a British court to request his extradition but were turned down.

(Additional reporting by James Kilner)

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Former KGB spy faces Litvinenko murder charge

- Andrei Lugovoi met Russian exile on day he fell ill
- Tony Blair calls for full cooperation from Russia
- Russia refuses to meet extradition request

DATE: 07-15-2010

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REASON: 1.4 (C)

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Ros Taylor and Luke Harding in Moscow
 Tuesday May 22, 2007
Guardian Unlimited



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Andrei Lugovoi speaks to the media in Moscow in December. Photograph: Alexander Zemlianichenko/AP

Andrei Lugovoi, one of the Russian men who met Alexander Litvinenko on the day he fell ill with polonium poisoning, is to be charged with his murder.

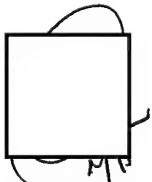
The director of public prosecutions, Sir Ken Macdonald, said he had instructed lawyers from the Crown Prosecution Service to seek the early extradition of Mr Lugovoi from Moscow to Britain to stand trial "for this extraordinarily grave crime".

"I have today concluded that the evidence sent to us by the police is sufficient to charge Andrei Lugovoi with the murder of Mr Litvinenko by deliberate poisoning," Sir Ken said this morning. "I have further concluded that a prosecution of this case would clearly be in the public interest."

Article continues▼

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The Russian prosecutor general's office said today, however, that it would not extradite Mr Lugovoi.

"Under Russian law, a citizen of the Russian Federation cannot be handed over to a foreign country," an office spokeswoman, Marina Gridneva, told the Russian news agency Interfax.

The announcement came after the Russian ambassador was summoned to the Foreign Office. Margaret Beckett, the foreign secretary, said she had told him she expected Moscow's "full cooperation" in Britain's efforts to extradite Mr Lugovoi.

The prime minister, Tony Blair, later added his voice to the calls for Mr Lugovoi to be extradited.

Mr Blair's spokesman said the case was being taken very seriously and stressed that the UK would "not in any way shy away" from trying to ensure justice prevailed. However, the prime minister's spokesman would not be drawn on the government's reaction if Russia refused to hand over Mr Lugovoi.

"Let us deal first of all with the legal process," he said. "Let the legal process take its course. Nobody should be under any doubt as to the seriousness with which we are taking this case.

"Obviously we have political and economic connections with Russia, and Russia clearly plays an important role in international affairs.

"There are major issues, such as Iran, Kosovo and climate change, where we have to have - given the nature of the world today - serious dialogue with Russia.

"However, what that doesn't in any way obviate is the need for the international rule of law to be respected and we will not in any way shy away from trying to ensure that that happens in a case such as this. That is the basis on which we proceed." Asked if the government was concerned that tensions might threaten supplies of energy from Russia to the UK, the spokesman said: "There are international obligations which any international contract imposes on both sides and it is in everybody's interest that both parties to those obligations fulfil them.

"That's the basis on which international investment and international confidence are based and I'm sure everybody is aware of that."

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Mr Lugovoi has repeatedly denied any involvement in the murder of Mr Litvinenko, a vocal critic of President Vladimir Putin's regime who lived in exile in north London with his family.

This morning Mr Lugovoi's personal assistant said the former KGB agent was in Moscow but was unavailable for comment. "He's here. But he can't answer the telephone now. He's not available," his assistant, Angelina, told the Guardian.

Mr Lugovoi's personal mobile phone was switched off. His business partner Dmitry Kovtun, who also met Mr Litvinenko on the day he fell ill last November, was not available. Mr Litvinenko's widow, Marina, welcomed the decision to charge Mr Lugovoi.

"I am now very anxious to see that justice is really done and that Mr Lugovoi is extradited and brought to trial in a UK court," she said.

Mrs Litvinenko will meet the Russian ambassador today, at his request.

Mr Litvinenko died in hospital on November 23, having ingested a fatal dose of the radioactive isotope polonium-210 three weeks earlier. On the day he fell ill, Mr Litvinenko had met Mr Lugovoi and Mr Kovtun at the Pine bar of the Millennium hotel in Mayfair, London, before lunching with an Italian academic, Mario Scaramella, at a sushi bar in Piccadilly. Traces of polonium-210 were later found at both locations.

A number of staff at the Millennium hotel were also contaminated with polonium-210. Traces of the substance were found at several offices and hotels Mr Lugovoi visited in the capital, and also on board a British Airways plane in which he travelled. He was treated for suspected radiation poisoning in Russia.

On his return to Moscow, 41-year-old Mr Lugovoi called a press conference to deny any involvement in Mr Litvinenko's murder, citing the fact that his wife and children had also been contaminated with polonium-210. "To think that I would handle the stuff and put them at risk is ludicrous," he said. "Someone is trying to set me up. But I can't understand who. Or why."

He said he gave "exhaustive answers" to Scotland Yard detectives who met him in Moscow late last year.

The Russian constitution protects citizens from forcible extradition, although there had been suggestions that the Kremlin might be prepared to hand over Mr Lugovoi in exchange for Boris Berezovsky, another opponent of the Putin regime who lives in exile in London. However, UK courts have ruled that Mr Berezovsky, an oligarch who fell out with Mr Putin, could not expect a fair trial in Russia.

Mr Lugovoi was a KGB platoon commander and bodyguard before moving into private security. He was head of security at a TV company jointly owned by Mr Berezovsky, and set up Pershin, a company specialising in security, soft drinks and wine.

Mr Berezovsky told the BBC in February that Mr Litvinenko had blamed Mr Lugovoi for poisoning him. In a statement he dictated from his deathbed, Mr Litvinenko said Mr Putin might "succeed in silencing one man, but the howl of protest from around the world will reverberate in your ears for the rest of your life".

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U.K. Prosecutors File Murder Charges Over Poisoned Spy

Tuesday, May 22, 2007

Associated Press

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Andrei Lugovoi

AP

LONDON — British prosecutors requested the extradition Tuesday of Russian businessman Andrei Lugovoi to face a charge of murder in the poisoning death of former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko, officials said Tuesday.

Lugovoi met with Litvinenko at a London hotel only hours before the former agent turned Kremlin critic became ill with polonium-210 poisoning. Lugovoi has repeatedly denied any involvement in interviews with the police and media.

The politically charged case has driven relations between London and Moscow to post-Cold War lows. Foreign Secretary Margaret Beckett summoned the Russian ambassador, and Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman said the government expected full

cooperation.

"Murder is murder; this is a very serious case," Blair's spokesman said, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with government policy. "The manner of the murder was also very serious because of the risks to public health."

Blair's spokesman said Russia and Britain had a formal extradition agreement, but he declined to comment on previous claims from Moscow that it would not surrender its citizens to British authorities.

(Story continues below)

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The Kremlin declined to comment.

Litvinenko, 43, died Nov. 23 after ingesting the rare radioactive isotope. On his deathbed, he accused President Vladimir Putin of being behind his killing. The Russian government denies involvement.

The former agent had become a vocal Kremlin critic who accused Russian authorities of being behind deadly 1999 apartment building bombings that stoked support for a renewed offensive against separatists in Chechnya. Litvinenko also was a close associate of slain investigative

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,274557,00.html>

5/22/2007

journalist Anna Politkovskaya.

"I would like to thank the police and the (prosecutors) for all their hard work in investigating the murder of my husband," Litvinenko's widow, Marina, said. "It is thanks to them that we have reached the point today of having a named person to be charged with this crime."

The charge represents a new challenge to already tense relations between London and Moscow. In a speech last year to Russian ambassadors, Putin laid out his foreign policy goals and urged them to strengthen relations with the "leading" EU countries of Italy, France, Germany and Spain. Notably, Britain was snubbed.

In January 2006, Russia's **Federal Security Service**, the FSB, accused four British diplomats of spying, after a state-run television report said British diplomats had contacted Russian agents using communications equipment hidden in a fake rock in a Moscow park.

The FSB said one of the diplomats had provided money for non-governmental organizations and used the episode to justify a crackdown on NGOs.

The Kremlin is also angry that Britain has given refuge to Boris Berezovsky, once an influential Kremlin insider under former President **Boris Yeltsin**, but who fell out with Putin and fled to Britain in 2000 to avoid a money-laundering investigation he says was politically motivated.

Russian investigators questioned Berezovsky in a parallel investigation into the murder earlier this year.

Berezovsky said that the charges against Lugovoi point directly to the Kremlin because such an audacious and complicated killing would not be possible without state support

"I am 100-percent sure that the British government understands the importance of this case," Berezovsky said.

Spy poisoning: UK seeks ex-KGB agent

POSTED: 8:39 a.m. EDT, May 22, 2007

- Ex-KGB agent charged with murder of ex-Russian spy Alexander Litviner
- UK prosecutors say they will seek to extradite Andrei Lugovoi from Russia
- Litvinenko died in London after being poisoned with radioactive Polonium
- He blamed President Putin for his poisoning – an allegation the Kremlin c

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LONDON, England (CNN) – British prosecutors are to ask Russia to extradite businessman and former KGB agent Andrei Lugovoi to face murder charges over the radioactive poisoning death of ex-Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko.

The Crown Prosecution Service said Tuesday they had evidence to charge Lugovoi with seeking his extradition over "this extraordinarily grave crime." Litvinenko died in hospital last November, several weeks after he was poisoned with polonium.

"I have today concluded that the evidence sent to us by the police is sufficient to charge Andrei Lugovoi with the murder of Mr. Litvinenko by deliberate poisoning," C. Public Prosecutions Ken Macdonald said.

Litvinenko was a fierce critic of President Vladimir Putin and had been granted asylum in the UK.

The case has put pressure on relations between London and Moscow, and the announcement threatened to aggravate the situation further.

Britain urged Moscow to cooperate in the case. "Russia should comply with the request," Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman said.

However, Interfax news agency on Tuesday cited the Russian prosecutor-general's office as saying it would not turn over Lugovoi to British authorities.

Lugovoi had met Litvinenko in London on November 1 at the Millennium Hotel, hours before Litvinenko fell ill.

But in January, Lugovoi told The Associated Press he had no role in Litvinenko's poisoning, adding that the allegations against him were "lies, provocation and government propaganda."

'Howl of protest'

On his deathbed, 43-year-old Litvinenko, who was married with a 12-year-old daughter, released a statement blaming the Russian president for involvement in his poisoning, an allegation the Kremlin denied.

Litvinenko said: "You may succeed in silencing one man, but the howl of protest around the world will reverberate, Mr. Putin, in your ears for the rest of your life."

"May God forgive you for what you have done, not only to me, but to beloved Russia and its people."

Litvinenko's widow said Tuesday she hoped justice would now be done.

"I would like to thank the police and the CPS for all their hard work in investigating this case."

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murder of my husband," Marina Litvinenko said in a statement. She later met the ambassador in London.

"It is thanks to them that we have reached the point today of having a name be charged with this crime," she said.

"I am now very anxious to see that justice is really done and that Mr. Lugovoi is extradited and brought to trial in a UK court."

Lugovoi, a former security service agent but now a businessman, traveled to London three times in the month before Litvinenko's death and met him four times, Fox News media reported.

Lugovoi and businessman Dmitry Kovtun told Russian media they went to a group of Moscow soccer fans and met Litvinenko briefly on November 1 to discuss business matters.

Later, they attended a soccer game between CSKA Moscow and Arsenal at Emirates Stadium in north London, where polonium-210 was also later detected.

Both men said they believed someone was trying to frame them over Litvinenko's

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Killings may leave Putin a hounded man

By Sarah Baxter
Washington and
Anna Voutsen Moscow

FOR one Russian journalist, a recent spate of murders and poisonings has become terrifyingly personal. Maria Ivanova is fleeing home this week for a new life abroad after being promised political asylum in America.

The award-winning journalist, an expert on the Caucasus region, had grown used to being followed and harassed, even beaten up on one occasion. But events took a sinister turn last October when an intruder broke into her flat while she was away.

She changed the locks, had a cup of coffee and went to bed. "I woke up in terrible pain early in the morning," she said. "There was practically no skin left on my mouth, only bare flesh. The same thing happened to my fingers. My skin just started peeling off." Her body swelled and she was rushed to hospital, where kidney failure was diagnosed.

A month later Ivanova was back in intensive care. She became ill and lost consciousness after drinking tea. This time, tests showed she was suffering from an inadequate supply of blood to the heart. "I have no doubt I was poisoned," she said.

Ivanova is not the journalist's real name. Until she leaves Russia she will not feel safe enough to be identified. "I live in fear," she said in her first interview about her illness. "I feel trapped and constantly threatened by the security services."

But the long reach of the Federal Security Service (FSB) has extended beyond Russia's borders since parliament gave it a licence to kill abroad last year.

It is hard to tell which country is safe after former KGB agent Alexander Litvinenko died from polonium-210 poisoning in London. In America, Paul Joyal, an expert on Russian intelligence and critic of President Vladimir Putin, is critically ill after being shot outside his home in Washington. He may have been the victim of a mugging, but nobody knows for sure.



The Russian security forces' lack of respect for human rights is the issue that united the writers

"Some of Putin's opponents intend to turn the tables on the Russian leader. Yuri Shvets, a former KGB major and friend of Litvinenko, believes Putin will be hounded abroad when his term expires in 2008, like the late Chilean leader Augusto

Pinochet, who was accused of human rights abuses.

"The biggest concern for Putin is what he is going to do after he retires and loses his immunity as head of state," Shvets said at his home in Virginia. "He should be afraid of turning into another Pinochet. Putin likes to travel abroad and one day he may go downhill skiing in Europe and find himself behind bars."

Barry Carter, professor of law at Georgetown University in Washington, also said Putin had good cause to worry. "Heads of state are generally protected, but once he stands down, his legal status becomes very murky. If he travels, it will be at some risk."

The deaths of Litvinenko and Anna Politkovskaya, the journalist who was shot in the lift of her apartment building last October, could form the basis of a charge of conspiracy to murder.

So too could the case of

Ivan Safronov, a 51-year-old defence reporter for the newspaper Kommersant, who fell to his death just over a week ago from the window of a fourth-floor stairwell in his apartment block. He was the 14th journalist to die in suspicious circumstances since Putin took office in 2000.

The Russian authorities called his death a suicide, but he lived on the second floor and had only just returned from shopping. He had also been due to become a grandfather. "Ivan and suicide are absolutely incompatible concepts," said Veronika Kutsyllo, deputy editor of the paper.

Oleg Kalugin, a former KGB general who has called Putin a war criminal, has become used to death threats over the years. "I'm very watchful about security, but journalists are less well prepared to face some of the dangers," he said.

Kalugin was rung by Joyal's

wife Elizabeth soon after he was shot in the groin. "She wanted to warn me that I might be next in line," he said.

Days before the shooting, Joyal criticised Litvinenko's murder on US television. Kalugin is keeping an open mind on the attack, but says Safronov's case was "much more in line with what has been happening in Russia — the physical removal and assassination of critics".

Safronov was looking into Russian plans to sell missiles and fighter jets to Iran and Syria when he died, while Ivanova has written extensively about the spread of Islamic militancy outside Chechnya, a highly sensitive topic. "Things have become so bad that I see no alternative but to leave Russia," Ivanova said. "I am being pushed out of the country."

There is no evidence that the campaign against her was orchestrated by the Kremlin, but the president has encouraged a crackdown on critics and allowed a culture of impunity to flourish. None of the killings has been solved.

Critics hope the threat to prosecute Putin in the West may restrain his regime. "The international outcry is unsettling Putin," Shvets said. "He is concerned about the amount of immunity he will have. There is a lot of hard thinking going on in Russia about what kind of position he could hold in future."

What degree of immunity from prosecution a former head of state has depends partly on his successors. "That's why they worry so much about who is going to succeed them," said Carter. "I'd advise Putin to get a nice governmental title and a good international lawyer."

Laden is believed to be hiding. American forces are increasingly targeting the terrorist leadership inside Pakistan. Admiral Mike McConnell, the US director of national intelligence, told a congressional hearing: "The intent on our part is to do that more and better... hopefully at some point either killing or capturing the senior leadership."

Last week McConnell appeared to be as good as his word after Nato forces arrested a top Pakistani Taliban leader during a raid from Afghanistan.

A joint force of Nato and Afghan army commandos in two helicopters landed in the Shawal district, which borders Afghanistan's Paktika province, and seized Hakimullah Mehsud. He was a close aide of Baitullah Mehsud, whose Pakistani Taliban fighters are believed to have sheltered senior Al-Qaeda leaders in North Waziristan.

News of the raid emerged as Nato intensified operations against Taliban forces in Afghanistan to try to foil a planned spring offensive. Observers in Pakistan's tribal areas report increased activity by Nato spy planes and more helicopter surveillance.

Senior figures in Pakistan's government condemned American claims of an agreement that allows them to strike from over the border.

Recent Nato strikes have undermined Islamabad's claims to be a partner in the war against terrorism. There have been incidents in which homes in border villages have been searched and

lah Khan, a journalist who claimed to have discovered proof that America was launching missile raids inside Pakistan, was kidnapped last year and found murdered in North Waziristan.

Last night Lieutenant General Hamid Gul, former director of Pakistan's intelligence service, said he was preparing to issue a writ in the Supreme Court to stop US raids.

He claimed that senior army figures were embarrassed at what they regarded as a breach of sovereignty, and that continued breaches could result in Musharraf being toppled.

America has been frustrated by the Pakistan army's weak grip on North Waziristan, which is effectively under Taliban control and is increasingly used as a base for attacks on Nato troops.

Yesterday a Pakistan soldier and three militants were shot dead at a border post there. Militants opened fire when they were challenged as they entered from Afghanistan.

■ Lawrence of Arabia takes on the Taliban
News Review, page 4



think of it as writing a postcard to your mum, dad, friends and everyone else in the whole wide world



The Taliban are launching raids against Nato from Pakistan

March 11, 2007 The Sunday Times

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Igor Domnikov
42, reporter, Novaya
Gazeta, fatal beating,
May 12, 2000



Sergey Novikov
36, owner,
Radio Vesna,
shot, July 26, 2000



Iskandar Khatloni
46, reporter, Radio
Free Europe, axe killing,
September 21, 2000



Sergey Ivanov
30, director, Lada-TV,
shot outside apartment,
October 3, 2000



Adam Tepsurgayev
24, cameraman, Reuters,
shot at neighbour's house
November 21, 2000



Eduard Markevich
29, editor, Novy Refl,
shot in back,
September 18, 2001



Natalya Skryl
29, reporter, Nashe Vremya,
beaten to death outside home,
March 9, 2002



Valery Ivanov
32, editor, Tolyatinskoye
Obozreniye,
shot, April 29, 2002



Aleksei Sidorov
Ivanov's successor,
stabbed with ice pick,
October 9, 2003



Dmitry Shvets
37, deputy director-
general, TV-21, shot,
April 28, 2003



Paul Klebnikov
41, editor, Forbes
Magazine, shot,
July 9, 2004



Magomedzagid Varisov
commentator,
Novoye Delo, shot,
June 28, 2005



Anna Politkovskaya
48, reporter, Novaya
Gazeta, shot in lift,
October 7, 2006



Ivan Safronov
51, defence reporter,
Kommersant, falls from
window, March 2, 2007

Killings may leave Putin a



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From The Sunday Times
April 1, 2007

The Moscow plot

The murder of Alexander Litvinenko horrified the world — and spurred former Moscow correspondent Martin Sixsmith into a dangerous hunt for the killers. As he reports in this extract from an explosive book on his findings, the clues lead into the heart of Russia's secret police

It was six o'clock on a Monday evening and the snowstorm had set in for the day. Cutting down the side of GUM, the Victorian department store that stares across Red Square to the Kremlin, I could see barely 10ft in front of me.

The red brick of the Kremlin wall emerged from the gloom and I was transported back to the first time I had come here, 20 years earlier. Then I was a young reporter with a coveted pass to attend Mikhail Gorbachev's groundbreaking Congress of People's Deputies, where democrats slugged it out with communist dinosaurs as Russia engaged in real political debate for the first time.

Now, in 2007, I couldn't help wondering if much had changed. The welcome at the Spassky Gate was pretty much the same: three uniformed guards with rifles and a metal detector. But they allowed themselves a welcoming smile.

From the shadows a figure called my name. Aleksei was young, slim and cheerily informal. We chatted as we turned into the long yellow-stucco building that houses the presidential administration, the seat of power.

In the lift to the third floor I asked Aleksei who he worked for. The answer was an embarrassed: "Actually I work for the FSB; but don't worry, I'm not a spy."

The FSB is the Russian security service, successor to the Soviet KGB. It was about the death of a former member of the FSB that I had come to the Kremlin.

I wanted to know whether President Vladimir Putin, Russia's most powerful leader since Joseph Stalin, had ordered the agonising death in a London hospital of Alexander Litvinenko. IT is hard to imagine that only five months ago the world had never heard of "Sasha" Litvinenko, the boy from the deep Russian provinces who rose through the ranks of the world's most feared security service, who alleged murder and corruption in the Russian government, fled to London and took the shilling of Moscow's avowed enemy before dying in the most sensational of circumstances last November — apparently a martyr in the covert war between the Kremlin and its political opponents.

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As a habitu  of Russian exile circles in London, I knew who Litvinenko was and that he was closely associated with the kingpin of the exiles, Boris Berezovsky.

Litvinenko's second wife Marina describes him as boyish and emotional, but she says he had ruthlessness in him too. Even his closest friends say he probably had the blood of more than one victim on his hands. But he dispatched them while carrying out his duty. His constant refrain was that he had always behaved loyally and honestly.

He spent most of his career being loyal to the authorities in his country, whoever they were: first the communists, then Boris Yeltsin's reformers, then the hardline autocracy imposed by Putin. He used to speak of Putin, a former KGB spy, as his role model, idolising him with an intensity bordering on love. But he was transformed to an acrimonious, diehard foe.

For six years Litvinenko had been venting his bile on Putin from London, hurling ever more outrageous accusations including murder and paedophilia. He had also directed increasingly bitter polemics at his former colleagues in the FSB. He had become involved in murky business dealings, with dark suggestions of blackmail plots. And he had exasperated and finally fallen out with Berezovsky himself.

The details of his death are now known worldwide. The British police have established that — in London on November 1 last year — someone persuaded him to eat or drink a dose of polonium 210, which destroyed his internal organs before doctors could discover what was killing him.

There is overwhelming evidence that Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitri Kovtun, former FSB men who met him that day, left a polonium trail all over west London. But there is no evidence that they administered the poison. Nor is there any obvious personal motive for their wanting to kill him.

Many others did have a motive for murder. In the end someone's patience snapped. So who had the motive, and the means, to carry out what was to all intents and purposes the world's first act of international nuclear terrorism? The answer lies in the social and political upheaval that brought Putin to power and in the business conflicts, vested interests and political corruption that have divided Russia into warring camps.

In this war each side accuses the other of the darkest acts, sometimes without the slightest basis in fact, and the hand of Putin or Berezovsky is seen behind every evil. Men like Litvinenko have been turned into the expendable pawns of ruthless masters.

As I conducted my research into his background, I was amazed by the life he had led, the risks he had taken and the enemies he had made with such insouciance. His past threw up so many potential reasons for his murder that I was surprised he had survived as long as he did.

The son of a military man, Litvinenko did his military service in an elite division under the command of the KGB and was later invited to join the KGB's counter-intel-ligence service in the twilight years of the Soviet Union. In the mid-1990s, when Chechnya was fighting for independence, he was sent there with the new FSB's special forces, the Osobysty. He claimed to have experienced an epiphany interrogating a teenage Chechen fighter who told him: "I am not alone; the whole of my class enlisted straight after we graduated from school. We just knew we had to do it . . . for our country."

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There were also less savoury tales of his conduct. His former FSB commander in Chechnya, Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Gusak, publicly accused him after he was poisoned last November of having been a torturer, a killer and a coward.

It is indisputable that the FSB committed many atrocities in Chechnya, and some of Litvinenko's closest friends accept that, as a member of the feared Osobysty, he must have been involved in dirty work.

Gusak, however, is not a disinterested witness. He was intimately linked with an episode that bears directly on Litvinenko's murder.

AFTER Chechnya, Litvinenko was invited to join a new unit, the Directorate for the Analysis and Suppression of the Activities of Criminal Organisations (URPO), set up to wipe out the crime bosses who were plundering Russia.

In Chechnya, questions of legality and human rights rarely impeded FSB operations. Now the same *bespredel* (lawlessness within the state) was going to be unleashed in Moscow. Litvinenko would later describe URPO as the "bureau of nonjudicial executions".

Andrei Nekrasov, a film maker and friend of Litvinenko, told me: "That unit, to be completely frank, was composed of people that the leadership thought were capable of pulling off quite violent operations . . . and never talking about them."

The director of the FSB at the time, Nikolai Kovalyov, says: "Litvinenko and co supported the creation of so-called White Death Brigades — in plain language, hit squads. Their reasoning was that it was impossible to combat organised crime in Russia with legal methods, so illegal methods would have to be used. That is to say, murders . . ."

In late 1997, URPO was put under the control of a senior FSB colonel, Yevgeny Khokholkov, whom Litvinenko had investigated for connections with drug gangs. Despite a compromising videotape, Khokholkov had kept his job. Disenchantment was sown in Litvinenko's mind.

It heightened when he was ordered to ambush and beat up Mikhail Trepashkin, an FSB lieutenant-colonel who had been probing allegations that high-ranking officers were involved in serious crime.

Unable to defend himself, the slightly built Trepashkin begged Litvinenko for the chance to explain what he had found out about FSB corruption. Marina Litvinenko says he convinced her husband that things were badly wrong in the FSB and that someone had to do something about it.

The chance to do something soon arose. On December 27 1997, according to Litvinenko, he and four other URPO officers were called into Khokholkov's office and told to assassinate Boris Berezovsky.

No written order was given. There was clearly a well-established process of deniability in place: such decisions were taken in cosy chats on sofas in private offices with no minutes and no paper trail. This is of crucial importance now in examining the decision-making process behind Litvinenko's own assassination nearly a decade later.

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In 1997 Berezovsky was probably the most powerful man in Russia. He and other postcommunist billion-aires had rescued Yeltsin from defeat in the 1996 presidential elections with unlimited money and media support. In return, Yeltsin had rewarded them with the keys to Russia's economy, auctioning off state companies at knockdown prices.

Berezovsky was also a media magnate. His real interest, however, was the acquisition of power. He exerted such influence over the weak and chronically drunk president that he was widely regarded as making decisions for him. By the time Litvinenko was ordered to kill him, everyone knew that Berezovsky was a man not to be trifled with.

Litvinenko had an additional problem: he knew Berezovsky well. He had investigated a bomb attack on the rising tycoon in 1994, and they had become friends. The relationship had been cemented when, Berezovsky says, Litvinenko prevented the Moscow police from framing him for the murder of a prominent television presenter. "Alexander really saved my life, there was no doubt about it."

For two months, Litvinenko and his comrades carefully teased out who was behind the proposed assassination, talking to contacts and sources, trying to discover if its backers were themselves powerful people and whether or not it would be in their own interests to go along with it. They knew a bad call could mean an end to their careers and, quite possibly, their lives.

Concluding that the top people in the FSB didn't know about the order to kill Berezovsky, they reported it to the director. The move backfired. Khokholkov denied their story, and they were put under investigation.

Meeting secretly, the five men decided to seek protection from their proposed victim. Berezovsky could be a very powerful patron for a group of ambitious FSB officers looking to further their careers. Litvinenko told him the whole story.

"Initially I thought it was just a joke," says Berezovsky. But he also spotted the potential to get control of the FSB.

He asked Litvinenko to bring the other four men to his office to make a videotape of their allegations. Only three turned up, but on the video one is heard quoting the order they received: "He said to us, 'If there was an order to knock someone off — sorry, to kill; he said to kill — could you fix it?'"

Berezovsky: "To kill me?" Agent: "Yes, of course you." An FSB man later identified as Alexander Gusak also describes on the tape a face-to-face meeting with Khokholkov where he was asked if he would kill Berezovsky. "I replied that if it was properly sanctioned and had the right stamps — that is, the stamp of the prosecutor's office and the stamp of our own organisation — and it had the right materials to back it up, I would be ready to kill Berezovsky and anyone else."

Berezovsky took the incriminating videotape to a rising star in the Kremlin: Vladimir Putin, at the time a presidential aide. Berezovsky considered him a reformer and a friend. They regularly visited each other's houses and even took skiing holidays together.

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At first the ploy seemed to work. Putin took charge of the FSB, and the hated Khokholkov was transferred. Litvinenko thought he would have a big role in a cleaned-up FSB under his hero Putin.

Berezovsky had helped get Putin appointed and now expected him to pay this favour back by installing friendly faces in all the positions of power. If things worked out, the FSB would become a loyal Berezovsky fiefdom for him in the looming power battles over the succession to Yeltsin.

It didn't work out, however. Putin's debt of gratitude was small beer compared with the need to look after number one. The Berezovsky camp was just one among several warring Kremlin factions he weighed up to decide where his best interests lay.

To apply pressure on Putin, Berezovsky told Litvinenko and his colleagues to go public with their revelations about the assassination plot in a televised press conference. When some of the shocked agents refused — it was unheard of for FSB men to go public — he told them they had come too far to turn back.

On the eve of the press conference he summoned them to a grey-stuccoed building that had once been the family mansion of the noble Smirnov family. Inside, they were served drinks in Berezovsky's club, the Logovaz Salon, with its gilded walls, ornate decorations and giant aquarium. Then they were coached on the statements they would be making.

Next day, in front of the cameras, Litvinenko accused his superiors of extortion, kidnappings and murder and, in a not very coded message to Putin, called on the FSB to cleanse itself.

Litvinenko identified himself but the five men with him were not so brave: one wore a ski mask and the others dark glasses. I now believe I know their names, which would recur with ominous regularity in both Litvinenko's future life and the investigation of his eventual death.

They included Gusak, who would accuse Litvinenko of war crimes in Chechnya; Colonel Viktor Shebalin, who sat next to Litvinenko making an exaggerated show of friendship and support; and Major Andrei Ponkin, who was the only other man to speak. Ponkin alleged, among other things, that he and others had been instructed to kill the dissident former FSB man Mikhail Trepashkin.

Far from being nudged into cooperating, Putin was infuriated. The whistle-blowers were called in by FSB interrogators. Some were threatened, others offered inducements. It was made forcefully clear to them that they had brought shame on the service and the motherland. They could face the prospect of prison, or they could recant and agree to work against the "traitors" who had led them astray.

The question of exactly which of Litvinenko's comrades succumbed to these blandishments is a vital piece of information for anyone seeking to unravel the events that led to his death.

Marina Litvinenko claims Shebalin was working all along for the FSB as "a provocateur". Litvinenko's friend, the historian Yuri Felshtinsky, believes Shebalin, Ponkin and Gusak all took roles in Putin's subsequent war against Berezovsky and Litvinenko.

From that day on they would have every incentive to silence the increasingly irritating voice of the man they claimed had tricked them into putting their lives and careers on the line.

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Events then moved rapidly. Berezovsky slid down the greasy pole of Kremlin politics as Putin rose up it. He was given a ceremonial job that kept him out of Moscow, and in March 1999 he was ousted altogether. Within days Litvinenko was arrested for trumped up petty crimes.

Felshtinsky says that the FSB tried to persuade Litvinenko to cut a deal in the same way that his former colleagues seem to have done. "When he refused . . . the FSB told him, 'Look. Now you must know the end of the story. The end of the story is that you are going to be killed, or you are going to be put in prison and killed in prison. But you know our organisation: there is no other way. You are going to be killed'."

He was charged with beating up an arrested terror suspect. To seasoned FSB men this was ridiculous; few could think when arrested terror suspects were not beaten up.

The prosecution produced a grainy video of a blond FSB officer punching a crouching prisoner in the face. The interrogator is wearing a military cap and I certainly could not identify him as being Sasha Litvinenko. He is, however, surrounded by apparent URPO agents.

Two officers who had served with Litvinenko recognised the film and they knew the man in it was not him. They found the original of the tape, which had other footage proving his innocence.

According to Litvinenko's father, Walter, they were about to produce the tape in court when Litvinenko was threatened in his cell. "The FSB came to him and said, 'You have a son. If you produce that video in court, you should be very afraid for your son'."

Even without the video, the military judge threw out the case. But as he did so a team of crack spetsnaz troops — Russia's SAS — stormed into court and the military prosecutor announced new charges. After another acquittal a third trial was ordered, and harassment continued.

FSB interrogators warned Litvinenko: "If they find you not guilty this time, it's not you we'll be talking to; we'll sort things out with your wife and your kid. You don't think you'll get away, do you? You're a traitor to the system and you're going to be punished."

His friend Felshtinsky made an unofficial approach to an FSB general, asking if a deal could perhaps be done for the Litvinkos to slip quietly into exile abroad. The general replied, "I can honestly tell you there is no way for that man to leave Russia alive. And if ever I meet him again, I will personally kill him with my two hands."

That, says Marina Litvinenko, is when Sasha made up his mind to flee, as Berezovsky had done. During his personal drama Yeltsin had resigned and Putin was now president.

SEVEN years later, at the end of a wide Kremlin corridor, Aleksei ushered me through an anteroom into the large office of Dmitry Peskov, Putin's head of information.

Peskov is a sprightly man in his early forties, a career diplomat who enjoys the confidence of the president. Over a cup of hot Georgian tea I tried to gauge if his boss really could have been involved in the Litvinenko poisoning, as the dead man's friends have claimed, or if the accusations were merely the fabrications or wishful thinking of enemies at home and abroad.

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An earnest, sophisticated man, Peskov is far removed from the bullying, stonewalling Soviet officials I used to meet. He comes across as reasonable and sincere in his love for his country and his faith in his president. He knows Putin intimately — he works with him every day — and feels personal resentment on behalf of his boss.

I knew he had discussed the Litvinenko case with Putin at great length and had given him advice on how to remain calm and measured in the face of what the president believed to be an unjustified personal affront against himself.

"You know, I would never discuss that [advice] in public. But nevertheless, what is obvious is that the president felt himself necessary to express his condolences to the family of Litvinenko. He accepted that it was a human tragedy — a man died — but he never tried to camouflage, to hide the fact that he was not fond of Mr Litvinenko. And you will find very few people in my country — including his first wife, by the way, and his two children — who are fond of him or who are proud of him. This is not the case in my country."

It was a strange sensation, sitting in the heart of the Kremlin discussing the personal feelings of the most powerful man in Russia. Would previous occupants of these quarters have been so open with a foreigner?

I asked how Putin felt about the allegations levelled at him personally, how it felt to be accused of murder. Peskov said he would not discuss such things in public, but I later spoke to another source close to Putin who knew about his feelings.

"The president is very upset by this," he told me. "He is upset by these accusations made personally about him. He simply can't believe that people are saying these things about him as a person. He's very angry about the way the British press has named him as a murderer — that's why he won't speak about it any more."

I asked why, if this was the case, Putin had refrained from expressing his anger and hurt. He told me: "The president doesn't like his feelings being discussed in public."

Even if Putin had not personally ordered the Litvinenko killing, it could still have been the unauthorised work of the Russian security services. I asked Peskov if the president had ordered an inquiry to make sure the FSB was not involved.

"Look, I don't know. I am being very frank with you now. It's not a question of Putin not being sure if such an involvement was possible or impossible. It is hard for us to imagine that there is the slightest idea that such a possibility could exist. For us the tiniest possibility is out of the question. There is not even the tiniest possibility, not even a hypothetical possibility of our special services being involved."

Up to now I had been convinced by what I had heard. On the balance of evidence I was coming to the conclusion that Putin himself had had no hand in the murder. But this was something different: Peskov could offer no evidence that ruled out the possibility of a freelance operation, or that suggested Moscow had even tried to rule one out.

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When I pressed him he told me: "For that purpose our prosecutor's office has opened its own investigation." It was clear where I would have to go.

The office of the prosecutor general of the Russian Federation is set behind a small, anonymous-looking wooden door on Bolshaya Dmitrovka, a street behind the Bolshoi theatre. The prosecutor's office is a powerful institution, combining oversight of policing, investigation and prosecution. The Metropolitan police's finest visited it two weeks before me, looking for clues in the Litvinenko case.

As in the Kremlin, my reception was warm and friendly. Two young detectives, Sasha and Kolya, walked me upstairs to a cosy, overheated second-floor office. An attractive woman in her mid-thirties introduced herself as Marina Gridneva, senior legal counsel and head of the information division. She introduced another detective, and they produced a teapot and a large sponge cake topped with apricot jam. It was, explained Marina, homemade. With a cup of a very unusual, aromatic tea, I ate two slices.

The charm offensive seemed genuine and they laughed when I said journalists would not get similar treatment from Scotland Yard. But hospitality did not mean they were going to answer my questions. All my inquiries about the possibility of FSB involvement in Litvinenko's murder were met with a steely: "That is part of an ongoing investigation so we cannot comment."

After 20 minutes we seemed to be getting nowhere. I decided to be a little provocative. "What about the new laws of July 2006?" I asked. One of them allows the president to use the Russian secret services to eliminate "extremists" in Russia and on foreign territory. And another expands the definition of "extrem-ism" to include anyone "libellously critical of the Russian authorities"?

"It looks like a pretty clear mandate to go out and kill people like Litvinenko, doesn't it?" I suggested.

The two detectives asked for a moment to consult. They tapped at a computer and phoned for some documents. My tape recorder registered an air of mild panic. Marina's voice is heard asking me to help myself to some more tea and cake while they sort things out. Then, after a lengthy pause, they are back with the explanation: those laws were not adopted with any evil intent. They were a response to the abduction and murder of five Russian diplomats in Iraq.

It seemed I was going to get nowhere. They had stonewalled me with a charming but immovable double act. So I said, "Okay, thanks very much", and they clearly thought the interview was over because they started smiling and suddenly became very expansive. Fortunately, my tape was still running to record what came next.

"Look, Martin, do you really think we'd bother assassinating a nobody like Litvinenko? Someone who left the country God knows how long ago? Who was no threat to us and didn't have any secrets to betray? . . . He just wasn't important enough. He didn't know any secrets that would be a reason for liquidating him . . . Do you think we would have mounted such a special operation to eliminate him . . . with polonium that costs the earth? That we would have spent so much money on him? My God, we could have used the money to increase pensions here at home. If we'd needed to eliminate Litvinenko, we would have done it ages ago."

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I thanked them and switched off the tape recorder. It was the closest I was going to get to an admission that such operations do after all take place. And if they take place, was it not possible that someone had his own reasons to conclude that Litvinenko actually was worth the price of a vial of polonium?

The more I probed, the more I was becoming convinced that Litvinenko had been poisoned by a group of people independent of the Kremlin but with close connections to the Russian security forces.

I knew it was a group with its own reasons to target Litvinenko, a group that could advance FSB interests to justify the murder, interests that would confer at least some immunity on it if the Kremlin were to become aware of what it had done.

How was I to find these men? I sat in my Moscow hotel room, a half empty bottle of vodka in front of me, and picked up the telephone.

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Extracted from The Litvinenko File by Martin Sixsmith, to be published tomorrow by Macmillan at £16.99. It is available for £15.49 including postage from The Sunday Times Books-First on 0870 165 8585

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Berezovsky launches Litvinenko foundation

04/03/2007 15:10 GMT



LONDON (Reuters) - Russian billionaire Boris Berezovsky launched a \$500,000 foundation in honor of murdered dissident Alexander Litvinenko on Tuesday and called on investigators to do more to find out who killed the former spy. Flanked by Litvinenko's widow Marina, Berezovsky said the foundation would seek compensation for all

those contaminated by Polonium 210, the radioactive material that killed Litvinenko, as well as campaigning for justice in the case.

"The UK government must uncover this crime or risk being seen as incapable of protecting the residents of this country," he said. "We are ready to do all we can to give the British government our helping hand."

Litvinenko was poisoned and died in London last November. In a letter read out by friends after his death, he accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of being responsible. The Kremlin denies the accusation and Russia has launched its own probe.

British police handed the results of their investigation to prosecutors in January, but little has been heard since.

Britain's Crown Prosecution Service says it asked the police last month to provide more information, but could not say when its review of the case would be complete and when any decision would be taken on whether to charge anyone for the murder.

Louise Christian, a human rights lawyer representing Marina Litvinenko, said the case could not be allowed to be brushed aside, especially if it turned out that people no longer in Britain were responsible.

"There is a real worry that governments will be allowed to stand back and there will be impunity," she said.

"If the Crown Prosecution Service has got evidence against one or more suspects, I hope they would make that public even if the suspects are not on British soil."

Berezovsky said the \$500,000 he provided to set up the foundation would not itself be used to compensate the victims of Polonium contamination but to fund what is expected to be a lengthy battle to win them compensation.

Marina Litvinenko was tearful and spoke little at a news conference to unveil the foundation, but said in a statement:

"I said in a letter to President Putin that I will not rest until Sasha's killers are brought to justice. The Litvinenko Justice Foundation will campaign vigorously for that. I also never want to see anyone else lose their husband to such a murder."

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Interpol joins ex-spy death probe

POSTED: 5:01 a.m. EST, December 12, 2006

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Andrei Lugovoi met Alexander Litvinenko before attending a soccer match in London.

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- **NEW:** Interpol joins investigation into killing of Alexander Litvinenko
- British investigators questioned key witness Andrei Lugovoi for 3 hours
- Kremlin: "Unthinkable that Russian government behind any killing"

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MOSCOW, Russia (AP) — Interpol has joined the investigation into the killing of Russian agent Alexander Litvinenko, Russian news agencies reported Tuesday.

"Cooperation through Interpol channels has already started, as several countries involved in this case," said Timur Lakhonin, the head of Interpol's Russia division according to the RIA-Novosti news agency.

The investigation so far has pulled in witnesses in three countries: Britain, where Litvinenko fell sick and died after being poisoned with polonium-210, Russia and Germany. Some of the men who met with Litvinenko on November 1 — the one believed to have fallen ill — traveled to London from Moscow and Hamburg.

The involvement of Interpol, the largest international police organization, shows the way for investigators in each country to obtain evidence and testimony. It has 186 member nations, coordinates cross-border police cooperation.

British investigators on Monday questioned Andrei Lugovoi, a key witness in the Moscow hospital where he was undergoing radiation checks, Russian reports said. Lugovoi told the agencies that he had been questioned for three hours.

"I gave testimony exclusively as a witness. I was officially informed of that before interrogation," the ITAR-Tass news agency quoted him as saying. "They make charges against me."

Lugovoi said the results of his medical tests would be known later this week and were "unlikely" to make them public.

German authorities, meanwhile, found traces of polonium-210, the rare radioactive substance that killed Litvinenko, in locations visited by Dmitry Kovtun, another contact, before his Nov. 1 meeting with Litvinenko. The Russian Prosecutor General's office said Kovtun had been diagnosed with radiation poisoning.

Lugovoi told the RIA Novosti news agency Monday that Kovtun was in stable condition.

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VIDEO

**were both in danger**
(2:10)**Radioactive trail leads to Moscow** (2:35)**Polonium is cultivated in a few laboratories in the world** (2:27)

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and "feeling normal."

Russian and British investigators interviewed Kovtun last week before German investigators found traces of polonium-210 in Hamburg, the city where he spent days immediately before meeting with Litvinenko.

Traces of polonium-210 have now been confirmed in a Hamburg apartment ex-wife, where he spent two nights, and the car that picked him up from the airport when he arrived from Moscow.

On Monday, police said that the ex-wife, her partner and two small children went to a Hamburg hospital for tests to check whether they absorbed any radiation.

The family showed no signs of external contamination, prompting tests to determine whether they ingested a radioactive substance.

German prosecutors are investigating Kovtun on suspicion that he may have handled radioactive material. They have left open whether the radioactive trail might have been involved in Litvinenko's poisoning, saying that he may have been a victim or could have been involved in procuring the polonium.

Lugovoi, Kovtun and a third associate who was in London with them on the November 1, Vyacheslav Sokolov, have denied involvement in Litvinenko's poisoning.

Litvinenko died in London on November 23, blaming the Kremlin for poisoning. Russian officials vehemently deny the accusation.

Deputy Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told the British Broadcasting Corporation "Newsnight" program that it was "unthinkable that the Russian government could be behind any killing."

Asked if rogue elements of the Russian security service could be responsible, "This is a question for investigators, I would rather exclude such a possibility."

Peskov reaffirmed that Scotland Yard investigators in Russia were not allowed to question witnesses face to face and had to rely on their Russian counterparts for assistance.

"Can you imagine Russia's agents coming to London here, and questioning them? It's unimaginable," Peskov said.

In a separate development Monday, a French police report obtained by The Press said Yevgeny Limarev, who reportedly blew the whistle on Russian agents to target Litvinenko shortly before he was poisoned, has gone missing from the French Alps with his wife and teenage daughter.

Mario Scaramella, an Italian security expert who met with Litvinenko at a London bar later November 1, reportedly said he had shown him materials from Limarev suggesting Russian agents' involvement in the October killing of Russian journalist and Kremlin critic Anna Politkovskaya.

The materials also reportedly indicated that the Honor and Dignity group of Russian security veterans was plotting to kill Litvinenko and other Kremlin critics.

The group's head, Valentin Velichko, has rejected the allegations as nonsense.

Limarev, whom Russian newspaper Izvestia reported is close to self-exiled Kremlin foe Boris Berezovsky, who lives in Britain, has not been seen in his hometown of Cluses, France, since Friday.

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Russian airports



Kama Sutra and feral cats

MOSCOW

To understand contemporary Russia, consider its airports

WORKING as a journalist in Russia, with its eleven time zones, its endless steppe and perpetual taiga, means spending a lot of time in the air. It involves flying in planes so creaky that landing in one piece is a pleasant surprise—then disembarking in airports so inhospitable that some visitors may want to take off again immediately.

But, if he has the strength, beyond the whine of the Tupolev engines and the cracked runways, a frequent flyer can find in Russia's airports a useful encapsulation of the country's problems and oddities. In their family resemblances, Russia's airports show how far the Soviet system squeezed the variety from the vast Russian continent; in their idiosyncrasies, they suggest how far it failed to. They illustrate how

much of that system, and the mindset it created, live on, 15 years after the old empire nominally collapsed. Russia's awful, grimy, gaudy airports reveal how much hasn't changed in the world's biggest country—but also, on closer inspection, how much is beginning to.

Sheremetyevo: Landing at Moscow's Sheremetyevo airport, first-time visitors may be unnerved to see their more experienced co-passengers limbering up, as if for a football match or gladiatorial combat. When the plane stops taxiing, or before, the Sheremetyevo regular begins to run.

Sheremetyevo is war. The international terminal was built for the 1980 Olympics, to showcase the Soviet Union's modernity; now it recalls the old regime's everyday callousness (the anarchic domestic terminal is even worse). On a bad day, the queue at passport control stretches almost to the runway.

The Sheremetyevo virgin soon meets the various species of Moscow queue-jumper: the brazen hoodlum; the incremental *babushka*; the queue-surfing clans who relocate in groups when one of their number reaches the front. The immigration officer—usually sporting peroxide blond hair, six-inch heels and an abbreviated skirt—offers an early insight into Russian notions of customer service. Reflecting the country's neo-imperialist confidence, the immigration form was for most of this year available only in Russian ("distributed free", it says, in case anyone is tempted to pay).

As with most Russian problems, cash can mitigate the Sheremetyevo ordeal: beautiful girls meet VIPs at the gate and escort them straight to the counter. If he passes customs unmolested, the visitor emerges into a crush of criminal-looking taxi drivers. If, as it will be, the traffic is bad on Leningradskoe Shosse, the road into town, the driver may try to ingratiate himself by driving on the pavement; a 50-ruble backhander will settle things if the police pull him over. On his return to Sheremetyevo, to reach his departure gate the visitor must negotiate a bewildering series of queues, starting with one to get into the building: if he is unassertive, he will still be standing in one of them when his plane takes off. There is nowhere to sit. Forlorn African students camp out in the upstairs corridors. The attendants in the overpriced food kiosks are proof incarnate that the profit motive is not yet universal—though stewardesses on Russian carriers offer unofficial upgrades on reasonable terms. For a small consideration, they sometimes oblige smokers on long-haul flights by turning off the smoke alarms in the toilets.

Mineralnye Vody: To reach this airport, in the north Caucasus, passengers pass through a series of military roadblocks, where documents and the boots of cars are checked by slouching policemen, looking for weapons or terrorists. But a sensible terrorist would leave his weapons at home and buy new ones at the airport, where a wide selection of enormous knives and ornamental Caucasian swords is on sale. There are also embossed Caucasian drinking horns, and a large number of Brezhnev-era copies of the Kama Sutra.

Mineralnye Vody airport is a lower circle of hell. In Soviet times, before the region that the airport serves was desolated by separatist insurgencies, blood feuds and government brutality, the nearby mineral spas were popular holiday resorts. The building is incongruously large for a part of Russia that today, for all its macho hospitality and merriment, feels more African than European in its violence, poverty and corruption. It is weirdly cold inside. Feral cats have been sighted. The floor ▶▶

► has not been cleaned since *perestroika*; the toilets are hauntingly squalid. On the wall there are arrival and departure boards that no longer work, and a big, proud map of the Soviet Union.

Vladikavkaz: Roughly meaning "to rule the Caucasus", this city, south of Mineralnye Vody, is an old tsarist garrison and the capital of North Ossetia, one of the semi-autonomous ethnic republics of the north Caucasus. Backed by the Caucasus mountains and bisected by the rugged Terek river, Vladikavkaz might be pleasant, were it not for the occasional terrorist eruption and internecine gangster bombing. The Ossetians are Christians, give or take some residual animism, and are Moscow's traditional allies against the restive Muslims of the other republics. Like several other local peoples, the neighbouring Ingush were deported by Stalin in 1944; the Ossetians took part of their territory, and the two fought a war in 1992.

Vladikavkaz airport is actually closer to another, smaller town, obscure and unremarkable until September 2004: Beslan. The road to the airport leads past the auxiliary cemetery that was used to bury the hostages slain in the terrorist atrocity at a Beslan school; toys and drinks (because the dead children were denied water by their captors) are scattered on the graves. The airport ought to be hyper-sensitive to security risks.

It seems not to be. When your correspondent passed through, he noticed a couple of shady characters and their hulking bodyguard talking to an airport official. The official took their documents to the security desk. "Who are they?" asked the security officer. "They are businessmen," replied the official, as the documents were stamped. The party appeared to reach the runway via a side door, with a large hold-all seemingly unexamined.

Kaliningrad: This airport has a sort of holding pen in which passengers are kept before being released onto the tarmac. Surveying the assembled crew, with their standard-issue gangster coats and tattoos, it becomes obvious why Kaliningrad has a reputation as a smugglers' haven.

It used to be Königsberg, city of Kant and celebrated Prussian architecture. By the time the Nazis, British bombers and the Red Army had finished with it, little of pre-war Königsberg was left. Then Stalin took a shine to it, deported the remaining Germans and incorporated the region into the Soviet Union. It is now an island of Russia in a sea of European Union—an anomaly that is profitable for a certain class of businessmen. As well as contraband, the enclave boasts most of the world's amber and Russia's ageing Baltic fleet.

The Kremlin worries that the Poles or the Germans might try to take Kaliningrad back; but, in truth, no one else really wants it. As the aromas of vodka and Dagestani

cognac waft around the airport holding pen, the consolation for the nervous traveller is that if one group of dodgy passengers starts something nasty on the flight, another one will probably finish it.

Vladivostok ("to rule the east"): At the other end of the Russian empire, near China and on the Sea of Japan, Vladivostok is the terminus of the Trans-Siberian railway. It became famous during the Russian civil war as a wild eastern entrepot of refugees and interventionists; nowadays it is described (mostly by people who haven't been there) as Russia's Hong Kong or San Francisco. Here you face a classic Russian-airport dilemma.

You have clambered around the tsarist fort, and inside the decommissioned Soviet submarine. You have seen the children riding reindeer on the cigarette-ash beach, and peered at the disconsolate alligator in the aquarium. You have also met the mayor, known in the city, not altogether affectionately, as "Winnie the Pooh", or "Vinnie Pookh". He acquired his nickname during his fabled reign as a gangland boss. The mayor has ridden the post-Soviet escalator from crime to business and on into politics, securing his office after his main election rival was wounded in a grenade attack. In response to questions about his past, the mayor inquires whether you yourself have ever been in prison. You are not sure whether the mayor is asking or offering.

A dubious car arrives to take you to Vladivostok airport, about an hour's drive from the city, along a road lined with the forests that, like crab and salmon, are one of the great but fragile prizes of far-eastern Russian power struggles. Your driver is keener on talking than driving. "The Chinese are too cunning for us," he says, decelerating with every fresh lament. "We are giving away our natural resources". The factories are all closed; there is no place for anyone over 40 in the new Russia. It becomes clear that this driver is not entirely

sober. You are running perilously late for your flight out of Vladivostok. Should you or shouldn't you ask him to go faster?

Murmansk: Well into the month of May, the runway at Murmansk is still fringed with snow; it dusts the pine trees over which incoming planes descend, along with still-frozen ponds and rivers. In the airport's VIP lounge there is a set of sofas of daunting tastelessness. The main terminal is mostly empty, save for a bar, a pool table and some fruit machines. Downstairs, outside the toilets, there is a strange drawing of a man wearing a trilby hat, silhouetted against the sun. But upstairs there is a lovely metallic relief on the wall, depicting everything that is produced in the Murmansk region, or that was once produced.

The biggest city anywhere inside the Arctic Circle, Murmansk was built for and shaped by war. It was founded during the first world war, and was a destination for the famous allied sea convoys during the second, when it was utterly destroyed. When the *Kursk* submarine was raised from the floor of the Barents Sea in 2000, the corpse-laden wreck was towed back to the nearby dry docks; nuclear icebreakers are their regular customers. A church was built in memory of the dead sailors, and stands amid the other monuments to deceased warriors. Otherwise, Murmansk is cluttered with the usual post-Soviet paraphernalia: a Lenin statue; shabby kiosks; gambling halls; pavements that seem to dissolve into the road.

For all that, the Arctic setting has its own appeal. Icy it may still be, but from late spring the Murmansk girls don their short skirts, and it is light around the clock. In the small hours, down at the port, seagulls wheel around the cranes resting motionless, like giant, paralysed insects, against the illuminated pink clouds. A Ferris wheel rotates on a hill above the town. **Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk:** In tsarist times, Sakhalin island was a giant prison camp. Vis- ➤

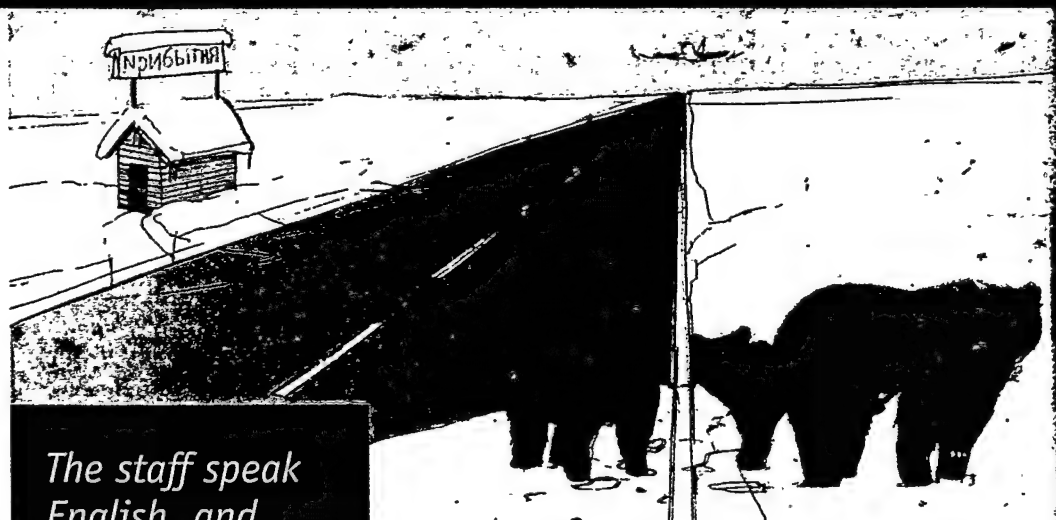


▶ iting in 1890, Chekhov considered it the most depressing of the many depressing places in Russia. From 1905, when Russia lost its war with Japan, the southern part of Sakhalin was ruled by the Japanese; it was taken back in 1945, along with four smaller islands that the two countries still bicker over. Traces of Japanese architecture are still visible; so are the descendants of the Korean slave labourers whom the Japanese imported. The Soviet experiment bequeathed sparse squares and omnipresent Lenins. After the experiment failed, many of Sakhalin's inhabitants fled its wasting beauty. Salmon can still be scooped by hand from its rivers in the spawning season, but much of the fishing fleet is rusting in the bays.

Yet Siberia and Russia's far east have always been lands of opportunity, as well as exile. On Sakhalin, today's opportunities are mostly in oil and gas, which foreign consortia are extracting from beneath the frigid Sea of Okhotsk, off the island's northern shore. New pipelines cut through forests, and up and down mountains, to an export terminal in the south. A stone's throw away, there are elderly Russians living on what they can fish and find in the forest; the few remaining indigenous reindeer-herders survive on even less. But in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, the capital, there are new hotels, bars and jobs.

The primitive domestic terminal at the airport has a tannoy system, but the announcements are inaudible, and their main effect is to spread fear. Destination names are put up, taken down and put up again above the check-in desks. The upper floor is appointed with weirdly ornate Soviet chandeliers. Last year a family of bears wandered onto the runway: the airport authorities hunted them in vain. But there is also a new international terminal to serve the flights from Japan and South Korea. The staff there speak English, and do not regard checking in as an unforgivable insolence.

Irkutsk: Five hours ahead of Moscow, in eastern Siberia, Irkutsk is the nearest city to Lake Baikal, the world's largest body of fresh water—water so clear that it induces vertigo in many of its visitors. The drive to the lake leads through vast forests, past the roadside shamanistic altars of the indigenous Buryats, under an enormous Siberian sky. In the 19th century Irkutsk was home to many of the so-called Decembrists, and the wives who followed them



The staff speak English, and do not regard checking in as an unforgivable insolence

into exile after their 1825 revolt against the tsar: men and events that might have changed Russia's history, and the world's. Alexander Kolchak, a diehard White com-

mander, was shot in Irkutsk in 1920; his body was thrown into the icy Angara river. Planes descend into the city's airport over identikit Soviet apartment blocks and rickety Siberian dachas. The current arrivals terminal is a hut on the apron of the tarmac. Passengers wait in the street until the baggage-handlers feel inclined to pass their bags through a hole in the hut's wall. The bags then circulate on a terrifying metal device apparently borrowed from a medieval torture chamber. The nearby departure terminal is chaos, though by ascending an obscure staircase passengers can find an interesting photographic display on "minerals of eastern Siberia".

The hut, however, is only temporary: a new, modern terminal is being built. It will be needed if the local authorities attract all the tourists they are hoping for. Lake Baikal, the awesomely beautiful main draw, was threatened by a new oil pipeline—until Vladimir Putin ordered its route moved away from the shores of what Buryats call the "Sacred Sea".

Yekaterinburg: Long-term residents of this city in the Urals shudder when they recall the state of its airport in the 1990s: never any taxis, they say, and very often no luggage. The arrivals hall still has a faint abattoir feel. But, next to it, a colonnaded Soviet edifice has been turned into a business terminal. And there is a new, glass-walled international terminal of positively Scandinavian gleam and efficiency, erected recently using private money. It has a swanky bar that serves edible food. There is an internet café where the internet connections work. "An airport", says one of its managers proudly, "is a city's visiting card."

It is not too fanciful to see the contrasting parts of Yekaterinburg's airport as a metaphor for the city's development. It was in Yekaterinburg that the Bolsheviks murdered the last tsar in 1918. Outside town, close to the border between Europe and Asia, there is a memorial to the local victims of Stalin's purges—a rare and moving place in a generally amnesiac nation.

In a nearby cemetery stand what wry locals describe as memorials to the victims of early capitalism: life-size statues (complete with car keys) of the dead gangsters who earned the city its 1990s sobriquet, the Chicago of the Urals. Because of the military industries that moved there during the war, Yekaterinburg was closed to foreigners until 1990. But these days most of the surviving crooks have gone straight, or into politics. Hoteliers are parlaying the city's infamy into a tourist attraction, foreign consulates are being opened, and businessmen and tourists can fly directly to the new airport.

Sheremetyevo: Ignore the snarling waitresses and look again at Sheremetyevo: something is happening. Its operators have come under pressure from Domodedovo, Moscow's other main airport, which was reconstructed a few years ago, and to which airlines have migrated in such numbers that its spacious facilities are often overrun. Sheremetyevo is getting a makeover (as are several of the other airports mentioned in this article).

There is a new café. There are now electric screens on the baggage carousels, displaying the numbers and origins of incoming flights (even if they do not, as yet, always correspond to the baggage circulating on them, much of which is still wrapped in clingfilm to keep out thieves). The nightmarish domestic terminal is being replaced, and a third terminal is going up. A new train service will one day replace the agony of Leningradskoe Shosse. Haltingly, frustratingly but undeniably, Sheremetyevo has started to change—much like Russia itself. ■

Dutch politics

Verdonked

AMSTERDAM

A spat over immigration may speed up the formation of a new government

AFTER a month of desultory coalition talks and a near-constitutional crisis over a minister who refused to quit, the Netherlands seems to be heading towards a dull centrist government—but with a Calvinist tinge. The latest coalition plan will try to marry the Christian Democrats (CDA) and Labour, the two largest parties after November's election, with the Christian Union, a party of the religious right.

This threesome—a sort of grand coalition-plus—will emphatically not be a love match. The CDA leader, Jan Peter Balkenende, is likely to remain as prime minister, but Labour is far from being his preferred partner, and he gets on badly with its leader, Wouter Bos. Worse, the two parties need a third for their parliamentary majority. Labour initially insisted on the claims of the Socialist Party, now the country's third-biggest. But the gap between the CDA and the Socialists proved unbridgeable. Another potential partner, Green Left, was unresponsive to offers. Hence the choice of the Christian Union, which mixes leftish economic policies with conservative social values. It has the added attraction in Labour's eyes of being a fierce critic of the outgoing government's anti-immigration policies.

Immigration remains the country's hottest-button political issue. Indeed, it almost brought down the caretaker government, when the immigration minister, Rita Verdonk, refused to heed the new parliament's vote in favour of freezing deportations of rejected asylum seekers. Her supporters invoked the doctrine that a new parliament should not seek to steer an outgoing cabinet. A constitutional clash was averted only when Mr Balkenende gave way, stopping the deportations and stripping Ms Verdonk of the immigration part of her portfolio, though she will for now remain a cabinet minister.

The Verdonk affair may mark a shift in mainstream CDA thinking. In the outgoing government, the party had an easy understanding with its partner, the more right-wing VVD, to which Ms Verdonk belongs. Immediately after the election, in which the VVD suffered heavy losses, both parties seemed reluctant to accept that their happy union was over. Some are still hoping that the coalition talks will collapse, leading to a fresh election.

But most of the CDA have resigned themselves to a new political reality that demands a shift to the left, especially on

immigration. Such a shift may become more obvious in the detailed negotiations over a coalition agreement. These talks will feature more than the usual horse-trading, so they may last for months.

The would-be coalition partners are acutely aware of the dangers their government could pose to them. The first opinion polls since the election show that both the CDA and Labour continue to lose ground. When the two get down to the business of government, it will be the parties on their extreme flanks that they will watch most carefully. That will not help those hoping to revive the European Union constitution, which Dutch voters rejected in June 2005: it was parties of the extreme left and extreme right that led the no campaign. ■

Eastern European spies

State insecurity

Spy scandals in eastern Europe reveal some damaging hang-ups

WHEN spooks start mattering, democrats start worrying. Eastern Europe has shed the planned economy and one-party rule. But the intelligence and security services still have disproportionate influence. Indeed, it seems to be growing.

In Poland reform of the military-intelligence agency, the wsi, has been the main achievement—critics would say the sole one—of the government in the past year. A commission charged with the job claims that the wsi was actively involved in influencing the media and business (particularly arms-trading and property), as well as government itself. The wsi has now been broken up into a military-intelligence and a counter-intelligence service. Some 300 Soviet-trained officers have been fired.

Across the border in Lithuania another scandal is blazing in the security service, the vsd. A top Lithuanian spy posted to Belarus, Vytautas Pociunas, was found

dead in mysterious circumstances—an event that some link to feuds within the vsd over freight contracts. A muck-racking newspaper which published supposedly inside information about the vsd was raided. A parliamentary committee wants the vsd chief, Arvydas Pocius, to go. He has suspended his service's two top counter-intelligence officers, claiming that they "pose a threat to national security".

Making sense of all this is hard. But one thread stretches back to the removal in 2004 of Rolandas Paksas, a president whose unfortunate choice of friends led Lithuania's allies to worry about the country's future. Mr Paksas was impeached after the then vsd boss, Mecys Laurinkus, told Lithuania's parliament about the president's Russian-related antics. That success may have made the vsd big-headed.

It is hard to find an ex-communist country in eastern Europe in which the intelligence and security services are depoliticised and uncontroversial. In Bulgaria the director of the department responsible for secret communist-era archives, which lawmakers have voted to open, was found dead at his desk in November, shot with his own gun. The authorities' delay in announcing the death, which leaked out in Brussels, prompted accusations of a cover-up. Two other senior figures committed suicide in October.

Romania's communist-era Securitate has proved the most pervasive and resilient, with extensive business and political connections. President Trajan Basescu recently sacked his intelligence chiefs in a row over the escape of a suspected triple agent who was also an arms-dealer and kidnapper (just another dull day in the Balkans). The president's critics wonder how, in communist times, he wangled a plum job abroad, in Antwerp, without help and encouragement from his or a foreign-intelligence service, something over which the files are oddly silent.

A common feature here is the weakness of eastern Europe's politicians and public institutions, which often fail to counteract the influence of those linked to the past. The old regimes of eastern Europe did not disappear in a sea of flags and euphoria in 1989. Many senior figures relabelled themselves, their money and their power—and are still doing nicely under the new system. It helps that decades of totalitarian rule leave people easily spooked. Few believe that the men in raincoats are under proper legal and political control.

One answer may be to start from scratch, with new recruits, something that Poland is now considering. Estonia, whose small, British-trained intelligence service is widely seen as one of the best in eastern Europe, did this in 1992. It also has a rule that politicians must never be spied on. "Such cases are for the voters to judge," explains an official, sternly. ■



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FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE

From left: Alexander Litvinenko, a Russian spy who was killed in London's University College London on November 20, 2006, before his death; Ilya Yermakov, a Russian consultant Mario Monti, an Italian activist Akhmed Zakharenko, and president Vladimir Putin.

'S LONG SHADOW

The sensational death of Russian dissident Alexander Litvinenko, poisoned by polonium 210 in London last November, is still being investigated by Scotland Yard. Many suspect the Kremlin. But interviewing the victim's widow, fellow émigrés, and toxicologists, among others, **BRYAN BURROUCH** explores Litvinenko's history with two powerful antagonists—one his *bête noire*, President Vladimir Putin, and the other his benefactor, exiled billionaire Boris Berezovsky—in a world where friends may be as dangerous as enemies.

FROM RUSSIA WITHOUT LOVE

From left: Alexander Litvinenko at London's University College Hospital on November 20, 2006, three days before his death; Italian security consultant Mario Scaramella; Chechen activist Akhmed Zakayev; Russian President Vladimir Putin.

O

n November 1, 2006, after leaving their modest beige brick town house in the North London neighborhood of Muswell Hill, a petite 44-year-old Russian émigrée named Marina Litvinenko took her husband, Alexander, nicknamed Sasha, and dropped him at the subway station. He had a pair of appointments in central London but promised to be home in time for dinner. It was a special night, the sixth anniversary of their escape from Russia, and to celebrate, Marina was making Sasha's favorite dinner: chicken and pancakes in herb sauce.

Marina spent the day attending a birthday party for a friend's 3-year-old, then retrieved her 12-year-old son, Anatoly, from school before starting to cook. Sasha, a handsome, strapping six-footer with feathery blond hair,

returned home at seven as promised, changed clothes, checked his computer, and sat down for dinner. Around 11 he rose to go to bed, saying he had an early meeting. When Marina went up later, she found him in the bathroom. He said he didn't feel well. Then he vomited. He remained sick through the night, throwing up almost every half-hour or so.

The next morning, leaving Sasha in bed, Marina dropped Anatoly at school and swung by a drugstore to purchase anti-nausea tablets. She returned home to find her husband hunched over the toilet again. He told her this was no normal sickness. The vomiting was too strong. Everything that came out looked gray. "It looks like someone has poisoned me," Sasha said.

There was no need to say more: this was the moment they had feared for six years. Back in Moscow, Sasha was known as the infamous K.G.B.-trained lieutenant colonel Alexander Litvinenko, who had publicly denounced Vladimir Putin's government for all manner of murders and corruption. Friends viewed Litvinenko as an American-style whistle-blower; enemies, and he had many, considered him a thug turned traitor. Now, Marina believed, Putin was having his revenge.

An ambulance was called, and Litvinenko was taken to a nearby hospital; 21 days later he was dead. On the day he died, what might have been written off as another obscure Russian dissident's strange death exploded into an international espionage scandal that threatened Russia's relations with the West, especially Britain, and sent hundreds of reporters

scrambling to solve a mystery that many have characterized as too bizarre for a John le Carré novel. Alexander Litvinenko, his doctors announced, had been poisoned with a radioactive element called polonium 210. He had, in all likelihood, been murdered.

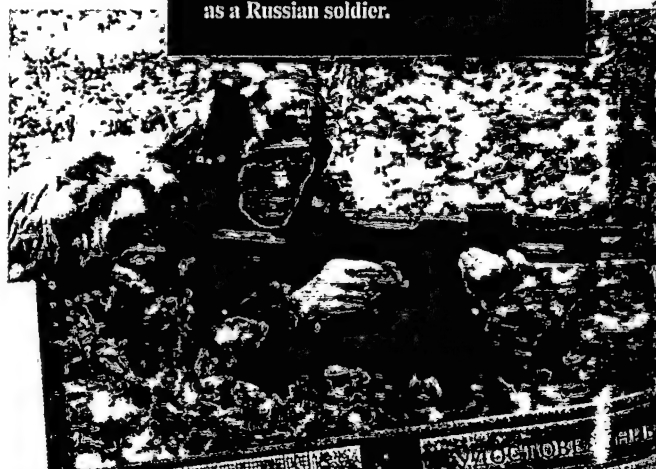
In his last years Litvinenko had grown obsessed with Putin, a man for whom he had worked in the Russian secret services, and whose hand he seemed to see in the world's every evil, from Middle Eastern terrorism to Afghan drug trafficking. From his deathbed Litvinenko issued a statement blaming his illness squarely on Putin's government. The British press erupted in an orgy of articles excoriating the Kremlin, stories that gained even more traction when it turned out Litvinenko had visited with two former K.G.B. men on the day he was probably poisoned. All through December most of Europe watched, rapt, as Scotland Yard detectives tracked telltale traces of polonium everywhere the two K.G.B. men had been: in London hotel suites and bars, in an ex-wife's home in Germany, and even on the jetliners on which the two had flown to London.

To this day, no one knows who poisoned Litvinenko; any examination of his death leads to one giant tangle of loose ends. The

THE SPY WHO LOVED ME

Opposite, Litvinenko's wife, Marina, after his funeral. Below, from left: Litvinenko in his post-F.S.B. days; celebrating the day he got his British citizenship; his F.S.B. identification card; as a Russian soldier.

LITVINENKO SAW HIMSELF AS "PUTIN'S ALTER EGO": LITVINENKO THE SYMBOL OF LIGHT, PROGRESS, AND LAW; PUTIN OF CHAOS AND DARKNESS AND VIOLENCE.



PHOTOGRAPH: FACILITY BY DAVID LITVINENKO
FAR RIGHT BY DAVID VINCENT

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HOT ON THE TRAIL

- (1) Boris Berezovsky. (2) An official police label seals the door to a Hamburg home visited by Dmitri Kovtun. (3) Police and media outside Litvinenko's home. (4) Andrei Lugovoi and Dmitri Kovtun. (5) Alex Goldfarb. (6) Polonium 210 contamination in Haselau, Germany.

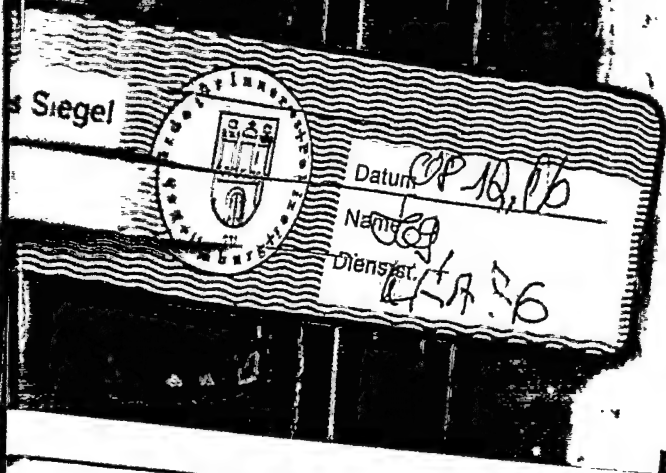
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PHOTOGRAPHS BY IAN WATSON (BEREZOVSKY); JEFFREY M. HARRIS (LITVINENKO HOME); ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN (LABEL); KAY NIETFIELD (POLONIUM 210); HAMID RUKHSANA (GOLDFARB)

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APRIL



"THIS IS PART OF A CLEAR PATTERN, AN ACCELERATING DYNAMIC," LITVINENKO SAID. "THEY ARE ELIMINATING PEOPLE ON A LIST. THE STATE HAS BECOME A SERIAL MURDERER."

story, like most good spy yarns, is nowhere near as black-and-white as the tabloids would have you believe. Among the few things known for sure is that Litvinenko was neither the saint nor the famous dissident the press wanted him to be. He was a minor Russian celebrity years back, and while it's possible—even likely—that his old enemies in the spy services had him killed, at his death he was little more than a gadfly. "The tragedy of Litvinenko is that, throughout his life, people wouldn't listen to him," says Andrei Nekrasov, a Russian filmmaker and friend. "To the end, he was frustrated. So frustrated. Because no one was listening. No one. Now they're listening."

His death, in fact, has made Litvinenko what he always wanted to be, an international celebrity, while drawing unprecedented publicity to the thousands of virulently anti-Putin Russian émigrés centered in London. A cynic might even say Litvinenko's friends had more to gain from his death than his enemies.

The New Russia

Since 9/11, Americans have lost sight of any number of international stories, few more important than the ominous goings-on in Vladimir Putin's new Russia. Every week brings another worrisome headline from Moscow. One day it's Putin threatening to cut off his neighbors' gas supplies. (Russia is now the world's larg-

est producer of natural gas.) The next it's another Russian journalist shot in the head, or a democracy advocate blown up in his car. Russia has been violent for so long that few in the West seem to realize that the kinds of deaths and murders in Moscow today are wholly different from those of the 1990s. Then the killings were products of the struggle to control Russia's newly privatized businesses and factories. Today the people who are dying are mostly "enemies of the state"—crusading journalists, whistle-blowers, overactive regulators, dissidents.

Putin was a K.G.B. man, and to a remarkable degree the renewal of official aggression since he took office at the end of 1999 has been accompanied by the K.G.B.-ization of all sources of influence. The vaunted billionaire oligarchs who emerged during the 1990s, the Boris Berezovskys and Mikhail Khodorovskys, have all been herded into exile or prison; the men who run Russia today are overwhelmingly veterans of the K.G.B. or its principal successor, the F.S.B. According to one recent study, three out of every four business executives and senior government officials in Russia once worked for either the K.G.B. or the F.S.B. Their presence gives new meaning to the term "police state."

Alexander Litvinenko had been one of them, a lieutenant colonel in the F.S.B. Despite all the headlines, he was never a spy. The F.S.B. is not Russia's C.I.A. but more

like its F.B.I.; Litvinenko was the equivalent of an F.B.I. agent, and an obscure one at that. His specialty was organized crime, and his job involved investigations, stake-outs, and interrogations of Moscow mobsters. Gary Busch, a London-based transportation consultant who has worked with Russian security services, recalls encountering Litvinenko at an F.S.B. office during the 1990s. "He was a thug," Busch remembers.

Litvinenko turned out to be much more than that. To understand his strange odyssey, I spoke at length with the half-dozen people closest to him, including his best friend and neighbor in London, Akhmed Zakayev, a onetime deputy prime minister of Chechnya. Litvinenko's widow, Marina, a charming woman with wide-set Slavic eyes, met me at a London Internet café, though at her new publisher's insistence—she is writing a book, due out in May—she was obliged to speak on background. So was her co-author, Alex Goldfarb, the man who brought the Litvinenkos to London, a wry émigré with a salt-and-pepper beard, who met me for breakfast at Claridge's. Other friends, fearing for their safety, asked to remain anonymous.

Little in Litvinenko's past suggested his future as a dissident. He was born in the provincial city of Voronezh in 1962, of a long line of military officers. He entered the army at 18, then, after graduating from an officers' school in 1985, became a platoon commander. There, he has said, he became an informer for the K.G.B., a relationship that culminated in his joining the spy agency in 1988. Job titles aside, Litvinenko was a cop, investigating criminal gangs, mostly in Moscow, for the next several years, as the K.G.B. went through a series of name changes, its domestic branch eventually becoming the powerful F.S.B. He was an up-and-comer, energetic and curious, and Marina is certain he could have made general. Still, until he met Boris Bere-

zovsky, in 1994, Litvinenko was nothing special. There were hundreds in the F.S.B. just like him.

Berezovsky, however, was special. A mathematician, he had become one of Russia's first successful entrepreneurs after the collapse of the Communist regime, much of his original fortune earned in software development and by selling Mercedes sedans to the country's new rich. He prospered as an early and vocal backer of Boris Yeltsin, branching into new businesses, acquiring old government factories, and transforming himself into the most visible of the "New Russian" oligarchs.

During Berezovsky's rise, in the early 1990s, the auctioning of government assets, known as privatization, turned violent, with murders and contract killings becoming commonplace. Still, an attempt on Berezovsky's life one rainy morning in April 1994 was eye-opening. Riding in the back of his chauffeured black Mercedes, he had just left the garage of his downtown-Moscow headquarters when a Volkswagen Golf, packed with dynamite, exploded. Dozens of bystanders were wounded. Berezovsky's bodyguard was maimed. His driver's head was blown off. But Berezovsky escaped unharmed. When he heard the news, Litvinenko realized he knew Berezovsky's name. He had overheard a Moscow thug talking about an attempt to extort him.

In the wake of the bombing, Litvinenko, in his role as a security agent, interviewed Berezovsky several times. A kind of friendship ensued. Berezovsky was looking for allies in the security services. Litvinenko, one suspects, was simply awed to grow so close to one of Russia's wealthiest men; their relationship would be akin to an F.B.I. agent's befriending Bill Gates. In his Russian-language memoir, *The Lubyanka Criminal Group*, published in 2002, Litvinenko indicates he didn't see much of Berezovsky after the fruitless investigation ran its course. Not until 1998, he wrote, did their paths cross again. By that point, Berezovsky had emerged as the kingmaker behind Yeltsin's re-election, and had led the negotiations that ended the first Chechen war, a truce that was said to have enraged Russian hard-liners.

At that point, in 1998, Litvinenko claimed, one of his F.S.B. superiors asked whether he could get close enough to Berezovsky to murder him. In his memoir Litvinenko portrayed this as a turning point in his life, a moment when he began seriously to question the pervasive official corruption in Russia. Litvinenko, who believed the request to kill Berezovsky emanated from a senior Russian general named Yevgeny Khokhlov, quoted him as saying it was time "we wasted that Kremlin

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THE POWER OF POIRET

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or Andrew Bolton, co-curator with Harold Koda of "Poiret: King of Fashion," opening at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute in May, the outré couturier Paul Poiret was "one of the most radically modern dressmakers in the history of the 20th century." Pope Pius X condemned the perverse Frenchman's harem-slave pantaloons, censors confiscated a movie of his ankle-exposing skirts, and at his fabled "1002nd Night" costume party, staged in 1911, he released his wife and muse, Denise, from a gilded cage and chased her around with a whip.

Among the sartorial treasures on display from Denise's private wardrobe is this fur-edged cloak—christened "La Perse" by its inventor—crafted from a cotton velvet designed by Fauvist painter Raoul Dufy, whose career the art-amassing Poiret helped launch. Last seen in New York 94 years ago, when Denise modeled it over a scanty white chemise, the coat has just been acquired for the museum's permanent collection.

The sensational reign of "Poiret le Magnifique" barely outlived his marriage, which dissolved in 1928. By that time such avant-garde clients as Josephine Baker, Helena Rubinstein, Colette, and Peggy Guggenheim had already migrated to newer *créateurs*, Chanel among them. In 1929 the house of Poiret closed its imposing doors, and the spendthrift master declared bankruptcy. "Perhaps," suggests art historian Kenneth E. Silver, "it was all too precious to last."

—AMY FINE COLLINS

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL ROBERTS

to get wasted and have sex all the time, but there's a "higher" class who do what she does: "It is about flirting and touching and being sexy and moving your ass and getting your body into the right position and getting the eyes on you. But then it's a kick to all of a sudden send them away again. You have a kind of power, if you play your cards."

So she's never had sex in Ibiza?

"No, I did, with my own boyfriend. That's something different. I did have sex *here*, on the toilet in the bathroom back there. It was a quick, horrible, nasty little fuck, that was all it was. Hahahahaha!"

Now all eyes are on the M.C., Baby Marcelo, who calls himself "the queen of Spain." He announces that his father is gay, and so is the Pope, George Bush, Silvio Berlusconi, and everybody at Amnesia. Then he cries out, "Long live Ibiza!" and the place goes berserk.

On my last night in Ibiza I go to Bambudha Grove, a "MediterrAsian" restaurant with a gift shop that sells oils, vibrators, and books with titles such as *Paradise Orgies* and *Painful Pleasures*.

In a pagoda behind bamboo trees I find Claire Davies and Mike McKay. In 1994, Mike and his brother, Andy, co-founded Ibiza's notorious Manumission party, which is held every Monday night at Privilege. Claire, 31, is a striking redhead with a soft voice and a dreamy, languid air. Mike, 36, has a shaved head and a long goatee, and seems peaceful as he hands me a joint of hash.

The BBC has called them "probably the most famous couple on the island," and what they became most famous for was having sex onstage with each other. "It was very

well received," says Mike. "Then it became an essential part of the party."

The word "manumission" means freedom from slavery. "The idea is that everybody in everyday life is a slave somehow, but at Manumission you're free to do whatever you like," Mike says.

In 1998 they opened up the Manumission Motel at a pink roadside former bordello. Mike says that Kate Moss and Jade Jagger came to see the motel's Pink Pussy strip club, whose always naked M.C. had flames tattooed near her private region.

"Everything happened in that motel," says Mike.

"The kind of stories we can't repeat," says Claire.

"We were playing too close to the dark side," says Mike.

In the end the police intervened.

"Thank God they closed it down," says Claire.

These days the couple is hatching plans to open a club in Las Vegas that will export the Ibiza experience to Sin City. They are also behind "Ibiza Rocks," a concert series with major-label rock 'n' roll acts such as Babyshambles, fronted by Kate Moss's on-again, off-again boyfriend Pete Doherty.

When they're not working, Mike and Claire lead a simple life with their three kids in an old farmhouse in the country, but tonight they have to attend Jade Jagger's going-away party. Von, the godfather of their kids, is sitting across the room. With his dreadlocks and huge Dr. Seuss hat, Von looks like a Rastafarian on *Sesame Street*. He's sitting with three young ladies, two of whom resemble *Penthouse* Pets.

Von, 45, offers me more hash and tells

me he organizes the Funky Room at Pacha. "What more do you want?" he says. "Beautiful chicks. Beautiful restaurant. Beautiful *hat*. This is what Ibiza's all about to me at the end of the day. There's a shabby side but a great side to it. I like the stylish side of it. You have to appreciate that I *know* personally every V.I.P. and his *dog* in the world. I just *know* them."

He grew up outside London and went through a "radical black man" phase in Washington, D.C., where he trained to be a social worker, then did a teaching stint in New York City. "But it's all bullshit," he recalls. "You know, you can't change the world, so I'm like, Fuck it. Ibiza and Spain in general is the place for me, to be what you are. Here, there's no political correctness."

He moved here in 1983 and started out as a podium dancer in clubs. Back then, Von turned everyone on to cocaine and Ecstasy. "Everybody pretends that they've been into drugs their whole lives: bullshit. *I'm* the instigation of Ecstasy."

"Sympathy for the Devil" comes on. Von has "umpteen" stories to tell but doesn't want to share, "because everything here revolves around illegal substances and perversion, basically."

The next morning, I settle up with the Navila's warm but mysterious proprietress, Lady Pepita. "So we'll see you next year," she says, as if it were a foregone conclusion. I look at her and nod, half in horror.

Back in New York, I realize she was right: that magnetic energy from Es Vedrà is pulling me in. A return trip feels inevitable. If not this summer, then definitely sometime before Armageddon. □

Litvinenko Poisoning



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 232 Jew." Rather than kill Berezovsky, however, Litvinenko went to the oligarch and told him everything—a move, Berezovsky has said, that saved his life.

Litvinenko always characterized his decision as an ethical choice; others have suggested he was cynically gravitating toward a new center of Russian power. Whatever

Litvinenko's motivation, Berezovsky took the allegation to Yeltsin himself, who used it as a reason to fire General Khokhlov and launch a housecleaning at the F.S.B.

The agency's new director turned out to be a little-known St. Petersburg bureaucrat named Vladimir Putin. By that point Litvinenko had compiled an extensive dossier on F.S.B. corruption, which included a list of generals he believed had ordered illegal assassinations. On Berezovsky's urging, he presented the dossier to Putin. The two men, however, did not hit it off. Putin, icy and controlled, seemed to regard Litvinenko at the very least as a loose cannon.

When Putin failed to act, Litvinenko went public. In November 1998 he and several other F.S.B. agents staged an unprecedented press conference in which they alleged that F.S.B. generals had taken bribes and ordered killings. The other agents wore ski masks or sunglasses; only Litvinenko identified him-

self. Afterward, many believed Berezovsky paid Litvinenko to hold the press conference, or at least put him up to it. Litvinenko always denied taking money. When I ask Berezovsky's London public-relations man, Lord Bell, whether Berezovsky arranged the press conference, he smiles and says, "Probably. It's quite possible."

The F.S.B.'s revenge was swift. In 1999, Litvinenko was arrested on unspecified charges and thrown into Moscow's Lefortovo Prison. Eight months later a judge ordered him released; he was placed on suspension and put under surveillance. Litvinenko blamed everything on Putin.

Berezovsky, at least initially, had the opposite reaction. In fact, he was one of the prime movers behind Putin's elevation to the Russian presidency the following year. Once in office, however, Putin summoned the country's most powerful oligarchs and warned them to stay out of politics. If they didn't, he suggested, it might be necessary for the Kremlin

Litvinenko Poisoning

to investigate exactly how they had amassed their riches. It was the beginning of the end of the oligarch era. By mid-2000, Berezovsky and Putin were enemies, and it was clear to Berezovsky that he couldn't win a prolonged fight with the Kremlin. Instead he sold off most of his Russian holdings to a mogul more to Putin's tastes, Roman Abramovich, and fled to London. (Abramovich lives in London now, too.)

There Berezovsky set about establishing himself as the exile leader of the Russian opposition. At a time when other oligarchs were making peace with the Kremlin, he hired Lord Bell, a onetime adviser to Margaret Thatcher, to help him warn the world about Putin. He began funneling vast amounts of money to pro-democracy groups inside Russia and its neighbors. For the Kremlin, Berezovsky became Public Enemy Number One.

Berezovsky's exile left Litvinenko—now unemployed and anticipating his re-arrest—with no powerful allies. He himself began

to think of fleeing. But Marina wavered. The two had met when a friend brought Litvinenko to her 31st-birthday party; Marina, a dance teacher, joked that Litvinenko was her birthday present. The attraction was immediate. Marina even overlooked Litvinenko's horrible teeth, many of which had been removed without anesthetic when he was in the army. Unfortunately, Litvinenko was married, and though the marriage was troubled, he swore he wouldn't leave his wife and child. Just weeks later, however, his wife left him. Soon after, he and Marina married, and about a year later, Marina gave birth to Anatoly.

Marina didn't want to leave Russia. She had been outside the country exactly once, for a week's vacation in Paris, and spoke no English. One day in October 2000, Litvinenko told her he needed to visit their dacha, outside Moscow. Instead, eluding his F.S.B. tail, he made his way across the border into Ukraine. From there he telephoned Marina and told her they were taking an impromptu vacation to Spain. He bought her a ticket and said he would meet her

there. When Marina and six-year-old Anatoly arrived in Madrid, however, Litvinenko telephoned again. He said they could never go back. Marina, a friend says, continued to resist. Husband and wife argued for two full days, in fact, before Marina reluctantly agreed to meet Litvinenko in Turkey. Litvinenko, having secured a false passport, then boarded a freighter across the Black Sea. He eventually met Marina at a hotel in the southern resort town of Antalya.

From Turkey, Litvinenko telephoned Berezovsky in London, and Berezovsky reached out to Alex Goldfarb, whom he had hired to run his foundation, the New York-based International Foundation for Civil Liberties. "You remember Sasha Litvinenko?" Berezovsky asked.

"He's your basic K.G.B. guy," said Goldfarb, who had met Litvinenko while researching conditions in Russian prisons for his previous employer, the billionaire George Soros.

Goldfarb flew from New York to Turkey, then accompanied Litvinenko inland to the capital city of Ankara, where they visited the American Embassy. Litvinenko asked

SKETCHBOOK: SHOOTING STARS BY MARK SUMMERS

Peter Gunn

Peter Gunn, 1958–61

Trigger

The Roy Rogers Show, 1951–57

Yancy Derringer

Yancy Derringer, 1958–59

Christopher Colt

Colt .45, 1957–60

Frank Cannon

Cannon, 1971–76

Tony Baret



for political asylum. A bureaucrat told him embassies don't grant asylum. If he wanted a refugee visa to enter America, he could fill out a form. Litvinenko left crestfallen. The Americans obviously had no idea who he was. Afterward he decided to try for London. Goldfarb arranged the tickets, and after sweating through an immigration check in Istanbul, they made it to Heathrow, where British officials harangued Goldfarb for bringing in unauthorized asylum seekers. Litvinenko didn't care. He was safe, for now.

Notes from the Underground

Litvinenko's "defection" was news for a few days in Russia; he made a headline or two in London with an assertion then making the rounds that the F.S.B. was secretly behind the 1999 bombings of suburban-Moscow apartment blocks that killed hundreds of innocent people. Putin, angrily blaming the incident on Chechen terrorists, had used the attack as a rationale to start the second Chechen war, which ended with Russia's retaking control of the breakaway Muslim republic.

The Kremlin filed papers to extradite Lit-

vinenko to Moscow, and the family, installed in an apartment by Berezovsky, lived in fear for six months, until Litvinenko's application for asylum in Britain was accepted; he later became a British citizen. Anatoly entered school, and he and Marina became fluent in English; Litvinenko never mastered the language. It took time, but as the months went by "Sasha began to say he felt safe here," a friend says. "He really didn't think the Russians would do anything to him as long as he remained in Britain."

In London, Litvinenko remained very much the willing tool of Berezovsky; without that relationship, he was just another unemployed immigrant. Through the International Foundation for Civil Liberties, Berezovsky gave him the money to buy the town house in Muswell Hill and a monthly stipend to live on. Litvinenko kept an office on the third floor, where he would disappear for hours surfing Russian Web sites; when Anatoly sneaked in to play games on his father's computer, Sasha playfully chided him. Through Berezovsky, Litvinenko met the smooth Chechen politician Akhmed Zakayev, 50, who was also living on a Bere-

zovsky stipend. Though they had once been on opposite sides in Russia, they became unlikely friends, and in time Zakayev accepted Litvinenko's entreaties to move into a town house across the street. There Litvinenko became a regular presence, playing with Zakayev's three grandchildren and taking them to the park and on errands. "He would come by anytime and say, 'I'm not here to see you, I'm here to see them,'" Zakayev says with a smile.

When Litvinenko told Goldfarb he wished to write a book, maybe about the apartment bombings, Goldfarb found a Russian émigré in Boston, Yuri Felshtinsky, who was finishing a similar manuscript and persuaded him to take Litvinenko as his co-author. "Alexander came in at a late stage. The truth is, he actually didn't know much about the bombings," says a person involved in the process.

Financed by Berezovsky, the book, *Blowing Up Russia: Terror from Within*, was a windy mishmash of conspiracy theories that charged the F.S.B. with blowing up the buildings to start the second Chechen war; while provocative, the text offered little in the way

Tony Baretta
Baretta, 1975-78

Inspector Luger
Barney Miller, 1975-82

Thomas Magnum
Magnum, P.I., 1980-88

Remington Steele
Remington Steele, 1982-87

Charles Emerson Winchester III
M*A*S*H, 1977-83

Charles Gunn
Angel, 2000-04



Litvinenko Poisoning

of evidence. It was first published in New York in 2002, and then in Latvia, where it was trucked across the border into Russia. Most of the copies, however, were seized by police. "It never got to Russian stores, but it probably got to the black market and a kiosk or two," says a Berezovsky aide. "The seizure of the books was a fairly big deal. That was great publicity." *Blowing Up Russia* was translated into English, Bulgarian, and Polish.

Even before the book was published, Litvinenko had forged a friendship with an émigré filmmaker and playwright named Andrei Nekrasov. "Alexander had been relatively well known in Russia because of the press conference, but after that, people started to forget about him," says Nekrasov, 48, a wild-haired man I found finishing a BBC documentary on Litvinenko in a West London studio. When Litvinenko resurfaced in London talking about the apartment bombings, Nekrasov was intrigued. He contacted Berezovsky, who put the two men in touch. "He was the kind of guy, after five minutes, you felt you'd grown up with him," Nekrasov recalls. "There were no formalities. He was very friendly, very open, very passionate about Russia."

The two began taking walks, Nekrasov listening as Litvinenko launched into soliloquies about Putin, with whom he remained obsessed. "They had been contemporaries, and he saw himself as Putin's alter ego," Nekrasov recalls. Nekrasov was fascinated with the idea of the two men as opposite sides of the Russian coin: Litvinenko the symbol of light, progress, and the rule of law, Putin of chaos and darkness and violence. He began to write a play called *Koenigsberg*, the story of a K.G.B. veteran who escaped to Western Europe and attempted to tell the world about the dangers of post-communist Russia. It was eventually staged in a Berlin theater, in 2002, and ran for nearly a year.

As their friendship deepened, Nekrasov began filming a new documentary, based on Litvinenko's book. Litvinenko functioned as the director's factotum, introducing him to many of the people who appeared in the film—former F.S.B. agents, women whose relatives had been killed in the bombings—though Litvinenko himself did not appear. The film, *Disbelief*, premiered at the Sundance Film Festival in 2004 and attracted favorable reviews.

Its success, however, stood in sharp contrast to the project closest to Litvinenko's heart, his memoir. It was the book he had dreamed of writing for years. Alex Goldfarb hired a person to interview him for two months. Once the interviews were tran-

scribed, Goldfarb took Litvinenko on an extended tour of Spain and Italy, where he edited the manuscript with Litvinenko looking over his shoulder. It was the first time Litvinenko had left the safety of Britain, and Goldfarb noticed how nervous he was, constantly glancing around.

Once again Berezovsky paid to have the book published, in 2002. Like the first book, *The Lubyanka Criminal Group* was published in Latvia, trucked into Russia, and seized wholesale by Russian police. Unlike the first book, however, the second was never translated into English and today is almost impossible to find. "He was very frustrated by how the books did," says Nekrasov. "They weren't really read. They had no impact."

Failure did nothing to muzzle Litvinenko, however. He had become the consummate dissident exile, a passionate speaker who would expound for hours about Putin the "criminal," the F.S.B., the Chechens, the war against the oligarchs. He saw the Kremlin's hand in worrisome developments everywhere: al-Qaeda, Afghan drug trafficking, Iraq. "He was fanciful," a Berezovsky aide says with a sigh. "He exaggerated like mad. He saw conspiracies everywhere, in the simplest things. He was a Russian. You know?"

"He was a great source, but also a terrible, terrible bore," says James Heartfield, a London graduate student who, with his associate, Julia Svetlichnaja, interviewed Litvinenko at length for a paper they were researching about Chechens in Moscow. "He was lonely. He wanted to talk to Russians. He talked to us ad infinitum. I mean, it was clear he had nothing else to do. He had a singular viewpoint, a Cold War assessment, that all evil emanated from the Kremlin. It might be true, but lots of it was slightly barking. And it made every conversation a bit boring. I remember when we approached Berezovsky, who told us to talk to Sasha, he said, 'Take what he says with a pinch of salt.' The sense was: he's a bit extreme, a bit of a nutter."

Litvinenko wanted to be a writer, but his work consisted mostly of an endless stream of long-winded e-mails to friends. "Sasha was a very prolific writer," one notes. "He wrote an article a day, on average. Unfortunately, over 90 percent of it was never published. I still have 300 e-mails from him that, frankly, I've never read. He was like a blogger without a blog." What articles Litvinenko did manage to publish were almost all carried on a pro-Chechen Web site called Chechen Press. These were mostly anti-Putin screeds, including one in which Litvinenko wildly alleged that the Russian president was a pedophile. "I told him he should stop writing so much for Chechen Press," says the friend. "He was becoming

too much associated with that one issue. It did nothing for his credibility."

In his spare time, and he had too much, Litvinenko ran. Actually he sprinted, 10 kilometers at a time, through the streets of Muswell Hill, returning to his town house sweaty and exhausted. Marina told him to slow down and try jogging; she worried he might have a heart attack. Litvinenko said he couldn't. He knew only one speed: full out.

Brave New World

By 2005, Litvinenko had reached a crossroads. Berezovsky's foundation cut his monthly stipend from about \$6,000 to \$1,500, barely enough to live on. The Berezovsky aide explains this as a routine matter brought on by the oligarch's erratic cash flow—his Swiss accounts are forever being frozen and freed up by Swiss authorities under pressure from Putin's government. But another friend says the reduction was made after Litvinenko's wife found work teaching dance, which brought in some meager income. Left unsaid was the fact that Litvinenko had little left to offer Berezovsky beyond his loyalty.

"Look, Litvinenko was small beer," the Berezovsky adviser says, "but he was useful for certain things, mainly interpreting what the F.S.B. was doing. Boris would call him to check on F.S.B. stories he heard."

Another man might have found work as a bodyguard. But Litvinenko wanted more. He saw other ex-K.G.B. émigrés consulting with or even starting their own private-security firms, taking home big paychecks for work Litvinenko felt he could do just as well. "He wanted a real job, you know, to analyze security issues," says a friend. James Heartfield adds, "He wanted to find work in intelligence. He didn't want to be a thug. To me, he seemed lost. He was tossing about like a cork on the sea of life."

In late 2005, Litvinenko contacted a one-time K.G.B. major named Yuri Shvets, an attorney who operates a security consulting company in the Washington, D.C., area. Shvets's main business is investigating Russian companies on behalf of Western corporations who want to work with them. His clients are typically considering major investments and want to know whether the people they will be dealing with are involved in anything nefarious—always a concern in Russian business. (This kind of review, routine in the corporate world, is known as due diligence.) Litvinenko offered to find Shvets new clients in London, for which Shvets agreed to pay him a 20 percent commission.

Not long after, Shvets says, Litvinenko brought him a client, believed to be Titon International, a London security firm. On behalf of its own, unnamed client, the firm agreed to pay Shvets \$100,000 to produce due-diligence reports on five Russian businessmen. For brokering the deal, Litvinenko

was that was
T ensu an c K.G had Mos wide rezo purc voi l zovs worl V mai self i soft in tt to B The ploy usu: Bad: that zovs who anyc the C beer. frier neve or w It on L ly w in M whei at B early she know ful i roof has , Lug F.S.I If they for r voi t relat Litv that cont Litv: to it spok rity or a it we radi or l:

PATTY, CW WE VERIFY!

It was to be paid \$20,000. A friend emphasizes that Litvinenko did no digging himself; he was simply paid for arranging the contract.

The deal that probably appeared most promising to Litvinenko—that could ensure his financial future, in fact—involved an old acquaintance, a 41-year-old former K.G.B. agent named Andrei Lugovoi, who had re-invented himself as a millionaire Moscow businessman. Lean and blond, with wide, owl-like eyes, Lugovoi had served on Berezovsky's security detail. When Berezovsky purchased the ORT television station, Lugovoi had become its head of security. A Berezovsky aide says Lugovoi left the K.G.B. to work directly for Berezovsky.

When Berezovsky fled Russia, Lugovoi remained behind. In time he established himself in business, running a company that sells soft drinks. Though wealthy, he moonlighted in the security business and remained close to Berezovsky, traveling often to London. The Berezovsky aide says the oligarch employed Lugovoi off and on as a bodyguard, usually for his onetime business partner Badri Patarkatsishvili. The aide emphasizes that Lugovoi was hardly a member of Berezovsky's inner circle. "Lugovoi was a guy who could go to Berezovsky's office and see anyone, get soccer tickets, whatever—but see the Great Man himself... well, that would've been more difficult," says the aide. "He was a friend, but not entirely trusted. Because you never know if someone is a sleeper or a spy or whatever."

In the émigré community, in fact, the rap on Lugovoi was that he had done suspiciously well for himself while remaining behind in Moscow. Marina had the same concerns when Litvinenko introduced her to Lugovoi, at Berezovsky's birthday party in London in early 2006. "Sasha, I just don't understand," she told her husband afterward. "Lugovoi knows Berezovsky, but how is he so successful in Russia?" Russians use the word for roof, *krisha*, to imply protection. "Everyone has *krisha* in Russia," Marina says. "Who is Lugovoi's *krisha*?" She suspected it was the F.S.B.

If Litvinenko had doubts about Lugovoi, they appeared to be overcome by his need for money. After Litvinenko's death, Lugovoi told a Moscow radio station that their relationship was limited to the kind of deal Litvinenko had struck with Yuri Shvets, that is, a 20 percent commission on any contracts Litvinenko brought in. But two of Litvinenko's friends say that there was more to it, that Litvinenko claimed the two men spoke of establishing a London-based security company together. Whether this was real or a pipe dream, Litvinenko certainly hoped it would happen. Lugovoi told the Moscow radio station that he had met Litvinenko 12 or 13 times last year in London, a frequency

that would indicate a deeper involvement than he has suggested elsewhere.

Litvinenko's work with Lugovoi may also have been the reason for a rare foreign trip Litvinenko made last summer, when he flew to Tel Aviv to deliver an unsolicited presentation to Leonid Nevzlin, the former number two at the now defunct Russian oil colossus Yukos and the man who ranks second on the Kremlin's unofficial most-wanted list, after Berezovsky. Nevzlin fled to Israel in 2003, one step ahead of Russian prosecutors, who took control of Yukos and, following a show trial, sent its C.E.O., Nevzlin's partner Mikhail Khodorkovsky, to a Siberian prison. Nevzlin agreed to see Litvinenko; at their meeting, Nevzlin said in a statement following Litvinenko's death, Litvinenko presented him with a 17-page dossier that "contained important information that shed light on matters involving the Kremlin and the effort to destroy Yukos." An Israeli spokesman for Nevzlin, journalist Uri Dan, declines to say more about the dossier, except that it has been given to Scotland Yard.

But according to people who knew Litvinenko, the dossier contained information aimed at exonerating a former Yukos security chief, Alexei Pichugin, who has been convicted of murdering a banker and his wife in Russia; the dossier argued that an F.S.B. hit team committed the murders.

The meeting with Nevzlin appears to have been a kind of test run for the business Litvinenko hoped to start with Lugovoi. "My understanding is Lugovoi and his partner funded that work—they were funding Litvinenko to go down to Israel and use this as a business pitch, you know, to get the account," says Gary Busch. "I'm not sure it worked out."

It didn't. But Litvinenko didn't give up. According to Lugovoi, Litvinenko had been attempting to broker a deal for him with a British security concern named Erinys. Founded in 2001 by a former British Army Guards officer, Erinys is known in security circles for a reportedly \$100 million contract to provide security for oil installations in Iraq. Its executives have declined comment on the case, but Lugovoi has said that Litvinenko took him at least once to Erinys's offices at 25 Grosvenor Street; the building, which also houses Titon International, happens to be owned by Berezovsky. Erinys declines to say what the meeting involved.

"Erinys is in the body-shop business, providing security personnel for difficult operations, like Iraq, Afghanistan, Nigeria—the tough places," says a London security consultant. "The kind of money a British ex-S.A.S. [Special Air Service, the special-forces unit of the British Army] person wants is shrinking in places like Iraq, [so] one of the things you look for is other [cheaper] sources. Rather than chaps from the S.A.S. you get 'Gur-

chas.' Russian Spetsnaz commandos are well trained, available, and cheap. I'd guess that was what was going on there."

Litvinenko grew so chummy with Lugovoi that, to Marina's consternation, he invited him to their town house. "It was incredibly naïve," says Akhmed Zakayev, who lives across the street. "But I understood it. He was so proud. He was proud of being a British citizen, of his home. He wanted to show Lugovoi how well he lives, that he has a garden. Only later did I realize that, by bringing him there, Sasha had brought Lugovoi close to me."

With that, Zakayev shudders.

Last July, in a vote little noticed outside the émigré community, the Russian legislature, called the Duma, passed a law making it legal for the Kremlin to murder enemies of the state outside the country.

"They will try to kill me," Litvinenko told Marina.

"Sasha, how can you tell me that?" Marina exclaimed. "I won't sleep!"

"Marusya," he said, using her pet name. "It's true."

Litvinenko took no special precautions, other than a home-security system he and Marina knew would never stop a determined assassin. But he began warning any number of friends to be careful. "Sasha was sure the F.S.B. was preparing to kill me," Zakayev says. "He would always talk about that, [saying], 'They will bring people close to you. They will use people who are old friends, people you knew in a different world, in a different life.'"

On October 7 a friend of Litvinenko's, a crusading journalist, Anna Politkovskaya, who'd spent years investigating the apartment bombings and other Chechen-related issues, was shot in the head and killed in the elevator of her Moscow building. A surveillance camera caught a chilling image of her unidentified assassin, a lone figure in a dark baseball cap. Litvinenko pledged to find the killer. A week later he joined a crowd of dissidents and human-rights activists in a memorial service for her at Westminster Abbey. Afterward he spoke with Andrei Nekrasov. As Nekrasov recalls it, Litvinenko said, "This is part of a clear pattern, an accelerating dynamic. They are eliminating people on a list. The state has become a serial murderer." Litvinenko predicted another killing at any time; for a moment, the two debated who it might be.

"Promise me you will not go back to Russia," Litvinenko said as they parted. "Otherwise you will be next."

Russian Roulette

Two weeks after the memorial service Marina dropped off Litvinenko at their subway station. It's impossible to reconstruct accurately his movements that day, although before his death he detailed them for British detectives. Specialists at Scotland Yard have

Litvinenko Poisoning

since spent hundreds of hours scanning video from every surveillance camera in the areas of Piccadilly and Mayfair through which he passed, looking for anything untoward.

Litvinenko had at least two appointments that day—of that police are sure. One was with an Italian named Mario Scaramella, a consultant to Italy's Mitrokhin commission, a parliamentary group that investigated K.G.B. infiltration of Italian politics. After Litvinenko's death Scaramella would come in for intense media scrutiny; for the longest time no one seemed able to figure out who he actually was. Not till January, in a long report carried in the *International Herald Tribune*, was it demonstrated that Scaramella was essentially a fraud, a self-created spy-industry gadfly who had once been arrested for impersonating a police inspector.

Litvinenko didn't know Scaramella well and thought he was a bit of a kook; he later told detectives he saw him that day, only after the Italian insisted. They met at a fast-food sushi restaurant named Itsu in Piccadilly. There Scaramella passed Litvinenko a copy of an e-mail he had received. It was in English, which Litvinenko had trouble reading. He started to push it into his bag, but Scaramella pressed him to read it. It was a warning—that both Litvinenko and Scaramella were on a hit list compiled by a shadowy Russian nationalist group, an organization of "retired" K.G.B. agents called Dignity and Honour. The memo asserted that Dignity and Honour had murdered Anna Politkovskaya and now planned to murder them, using a onetime Russian commando it named.

The memo was written by yet another mysterious Russian émigré, this one named Evgeni Limarev, who lives in the alpine village of Cluses, in the Haute-Savoie region of France. No one involved in the Litvinenko case seems certain of who Limarev was in Russia—some say a K.G.B. or F.S.B. agent, others the son of one—but at some point he emigrated to France, where he received a grant from Berezovsky's foundation to start an anti-Kremlin Web site. It achieved minor notoriety in Russia when a Moscow reporter went "undercover" there and came out claiming he had been told to "think up whatever you want" about Putin, "the most important thing is to make it as scary as possible." The Web site, Rusglobus, is currently off-line, and Limarev, after several days in hiding, told reporters he knows nothing about Litvinenko's death.

Litvinenko shrugged off the e-mail, saying he didn't take Limarev seriously. Afterward he made his way to Mayfair, where he had a 4:30 appointment with Lugovoi and his busi-

ness partner, another onetime K.G.B. man named Dmitri Kovtun, at the Millennium Hotel on Grosvenor Square, just across from the American Embassy. They took seats in the Pine Bar, off the lobby, a clubby room where people around them were taking tea. Kovtun was smoking a cigar and drinking gin. Litvinenko, who didn't smoke or drink alcohol, sipped green tea. They discussed the Erins situation for about 25 minutes. As Litvinenko rose to leave, a third Russian, later identified as Vyacheslav Sokolenko, appeared and shook his hand. Then Litvinenko took the subway home to Marina, where they celebrated the sixth anniversary of their exile before he began vomiting.

Radioactive Fallout

A day later an ambulance rushed Litvinenko to Barnet General Hospital. Doctors there hadn't a clue what was wrong with him. They checked for viruses, allergies, food poisoning, AIDS, and, on Litvinenko's insistence, evidence of chemical poisoning, but came up with nothing. He remained sick, unable to keep down food and complaining of muscle pain. Doctors noted with alarm that his white-blood-cell count had plummeted. After several days his hair began to fall out. His skin turned yellow. Doctors checked for evidence of radiation poisoning, but only of the gamma variety, a limited test. There was no sense that whatever ailed Litvinenko might be fatal.

For several days Litvinenko was convinced he had been poisoned by Scaramella. Only gradually did it dawn on him that Andrei Lugovoi made a better suspect. In Litvinenko's mind, Lugovoi was an ideal double agent, a man the Kremlin could have persuaded years before to remain close to both Litvinenko and Berezovsky. One night, sitting by his hospital bed, Ahkmed Zakayev reminded him of the lectures he had given him about letting old friends too close. "I said, 'Sasha, how could you?'" Zakayev recalls. "How could you let him approach you?" He didn't really answer. But I knew he had been nostalgic. Every generation of émigrés goes through this. They want to talk to others like themselves. That feeling, it's a dangerous, dangerous feeling."

Litvinenko had been lying quietly at Barnet for nearly two weeks when Alex Goldfarb arrived from New York. News of Litvinenko's illness had been carried on Chechen Press, then picked up by the "free" Russian media. British reporters, however, were ignoring the story. Goldfarb believed Litvinenko had been poisoned and had no doubt who was responsible. This was not only an international scandal, Goldfarb sensed, but a massive public-relations bonanza for Berezovsky. Working with Lord Bell, Goldfarb began throwing out calls to British reporters, at *The Sunday Times*, at Channel 4, and elsewhere.

To a man, they passed on the story. Without concrete evidence of poisoning, however, the whole thing sounded like some kind of bizarre propaganda ploy.

On Thursday, November 16, Goldfarb spoke with a garrulous London toxicologist named John Henry, who had been brought into the developing story by a Russian film crew. Based on the symptoms, Henry speculated that Litvinenko had been poisoned with radioactive thallium. Goldfarb relayed the tip to doctors, and the next day, Goldfarb says, they agreed. By Friday night both Goldfarb and Henry had given interviews to the British press. The Saturday papers made it official: Litvinenko had been poisoned with thallium.

"That was my fault," Henry says, sighing. "I spent all day Saturday on-camera giving interviews. Thallium, thallium, thallium. Saturday evening I got in to see the man. I told Goldfarb he should be transferred to a private hospital. Goldfarb said there was no need. The doctors were saying he'd have muscle pain for months, but that he'd live." Later the doctors backtracked and transferred Litvinenko to University College Hospital, a facility better suited to treat him.

On Monday the story exploded onto newspaper front pages around the world, dominating coverage in Britain for days. At the white-hot center of it all was Goldfarb, who emerged from the hospital every few hours to deliver updates to a growing throng of reporters. It was Goldfarb, working with Lord Bell, who snapped the photograph of the wan, hairless Litvinenko that ran around the world. "Oh, that Goldfarb!" exclaims a man who was allowed to see Litvinenko that week. "What a wheeler-dealer! He just engineered everything, the whole scenario, releasing that photograph, all that publicity. It was unbelievable. I have just massive admiration for the guy's skills."

On Tuesday, as if his newfound celebrity had bolstered his health, Litvinenko seemed to rally. "He was talking, smiling, he seemed very upbeat," says John Henry, who saw him that day. "I said, 'Have you got any muscle weakness at all?' He said no. I tested his feet. He could stand on his toes like a ballet dancer. The things he complained of on Saturday were gone. Then I spoke to the doctors, the hematologists, who said his white-cell count was simply gone. Something was wrong. I knew it. I wasn't impressed by his chances." Henry knew what reporters didn't: radioactive poison hits the gut first, then the hair follicles, then the liver. Litvinenko's liver had all but shut down. If Henry was right, the poison would next strike the heart.

On Wednesday, Litvinenko's condition worsened. "He was deteriorating, over the course of a day," says Nekrasov, who visited. "You could see it. He was falling apart before

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DAVID LEVENE

your eyes." Near evening Marina, who had stayed at his side for days, rose to take Anatoly home for the evening. Litvinenko was weak. "Marina," he rasped, "I love you so much." Later that night Marina got the call. Litvinenko had suffered cardiac arrest and fallen into a coma.

The next afternoon officials of the British health ministry held a press conference in a Westminster auditorium. As cameras flashed, they announced that tests had determined that Litvinenko had been poisoned not by thallium but by a little-known radioactive element called polonium 210.

An hour later Alexander Litvinenko was dead. On his deathbed, Zakayev swore, his friend had converted to Islam, a contention that irks Alex Goldfarb, who feels it is bad publicity. The following week Litvinenko was buried as a Muslim in a coffin lined with lead.

Spy vs. Spy

The Russian spy services have a long and vivid history of devising creative ways to kill the Kremlin's political opponents. Whether it meant plunging an ice pick into Leon Trotsky's skull (Mexico, 1940), poking the Bulgarian dissident Georgi Markov with a poison-tipped umbrella (London, 1978), or using a missile to home in on a rebel warlord's cell phone (Chechnya, 2006), the K.G.B. and its successors always seem to get their man.

In the days following Litvinenko's death, it was widely assumed they had done so again. Tony Blair promised to bring up the matter with Putin. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel said she found the matter troubling. From Moscow, Putin issued statements denying that the Kremlin had had anything to do with the case.

Litvinenko's was a unique death; he is the first person in history—that we know of—to die from polonium poisoning. A number of Russian businessmen have died under mysterious circumstances in recent years, some seemingly poisoned. Russian medicine being what it is, it's entirely possible polonium has been employed before. It is a little-used isotope, the Rodney Dangerfield of radioactivity, used sparingly over the years in spark plugs, nuclear-warhead triggers, and rocket engines. Locked in a baggie, it is perfectly safe; taken orally, as seems likely in Litvinenko's case, it kills. Polonium is available in minute amounts for as little as \$49 over the

Internet. Litvinenko, however, died from a dose perhaps 100 times larger than those publicly available. Only one nuclear laboratory in Russia produces polonium. Its officials have denied misplacing any.

The early news coverage was dominated by speculation that Litvinenko had been poisoned by Mario Scaramella. However, that theory quickly fell away as information emerged about Lugovoi and Kovtun. Both had retreated to Moscow, and in those first days both, clearly caught unawares by the mushrooming scandal, gave interviews about Litvinenko. They even appeared at the British Embassy in Moscow to give sworn statements. Lugovoi was eventually forced to hold a televised press conference, where he said he had gone to London merely to attend a soccer match between Arsenal and CSKA Moscow. Lugovoi, who had brought his family on the

room at a Sheraton hotel where the two had stayed in mid-October; in a car and a home outside Hamburg, where Kovtun had visited his ex-wife before coming to London; even on the two British Airways Boeing 767s on which they had traveled to and from Britain. By Christmas, polonium had been found at 30 sites.

Two weeks after Litvinenko's death, a reporter for the German magazine *Der Spiegel* was allowed to visit Lugovoi and Kovtun at a dacha outside Moscow. The interview was held, bizarrely, in an adjacent sauna; the reporter spied blue tape on the dacha's door handles, suggesting the building had been cordoned off. Lugovoi appeared healthy, though he said doctors had found traces of polonium in his system. He insisted someone else must have poisoned Litvinenko, who had then exposed him to the polonium already in his body.

Dmitri Kovtun, however, was another story.

As he sat beside Lugovoi in the sauna, it was clear that Kovtun had lost his hair. In what surely seems one of the lamest explanations in espionage history, he said he had burned his head in a tanning bed. Asked about the November 1 meeting, Kovtun said, "I can't remember that clearly today. He came into the bar 10 minutes after us, we'd already had some alcohol, and I paid more attention to my cigar." Kovtun said they had spoken about Erinyes and the soccer game, then agreed to meet again the next morning, a meeting Litvinenko ended up

canceling when he got sick. Five days after the interview Kovtun was admitted to a Moscow hospital.

Scotland Yard has kept its investigation under tight wraps. A promised "background briefing" produces a very pleasant woman who offers little more than a smile and a fistful of press releases. What is known is that in mid-December a group of nine British detectives visited Moscow, where they submitted lists of written questions to Russian detectives and listened as their counterparts used them to interview Lugovoi and Kovtun. According to one version, Kovtun's head was swathed in bandages. What was said remains confidential.

One possibility Scotland Yard is thought to be investigating is that Litvinenko was actually poisoned twice. Most accounts assume he was poisoned, perhaps by grains of polonium slipped into his tea, during his 4:30 meeting at the Millennium Hotel, where seven workers later tested possible for polonium. This theory gained credence in February when British in-



OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Litvinenko in London, 2002. "The tragedy is that, throughout his life, people wouldn't listen to him," says Andrei Nekrasov. "Now they're listening."

trip, insisted he was being framed. "Someone is trying to set me up," he complained, "but I can't understand who. Or why."

Lugovoi's denials, however, grew increasingly hollow once Scotland Yard detectives and national-health inspectors hauled out Geiger counters. Traces of polonium were quickly found at the Pine Bar, where Litvinenko and the Russians had met; at Itsu, where he saw Scaramella; at the Litvinenko town house; at the offices of both security companies Litvinenko had approached, Erinyes and Titon International; and at Berezhovsky's headquarters, tucked down a Mayfair alley. Worse, at least for Lugovoi and Kovtun, polonium traces were found in place after place where the two had been but Litvinenko hadn't—in an eighth-floor

Litvinenko Poisoning

investigators discovered off-the-charts levels of polonium in the teapot Litvinenko had used. But it fails to explain how traces made their way to Itsu, the sushi place where Litvinenko had lunched a full hour before meeting Lugovoi and Kovtun. It's possible Litvinenko had met the two Russians earlier that same day. It's also possible he had been poisoned during the visit they made to London two weeks earlier, on October 16. Maybe the first attempt didn't take. Maybe his murderer returned to finish the job.

Whatever the case, the press has all but convicted Lugovoi, and by association Kovtun, despite their denials. Perhaps surprisingly, a number of those in Berezovsky's circle aren't so sure Lugovoi was consciously involved. "I still believe that Andrei—and I've met him 10 times in my life—I still believe he did not know what they were doing," says one. "He may have made the introduction, but I doubt Lugovoi killed him. A killer is a specific thing in the K.G.B. Andrei Lugovoi is not a killer. He is a bodyguard. I would guess that Lugovoi was part of an operation, maybe without even knowing it, but maybe he thought it was an arrangement to entrap Sasha, to surveil Sasha. Who knows? I'm sure Lugovoi was a part of it. I do not think he was the hit man."

Who would have wanted Litvinenko dead? Just about everyone in London believes it was the Russian government, or perhaps onetime K.G.B. agents emboldened by the Kremlin's new aggressive ways. One of the few people mentioned by name has been the head of Dignity and Honour, Valentin Velichko. Velichko has denied any involvement and has kept a low profile, although, in a single interview he gave the German newspaper *Die Welt*, he re-

fers to the Litvinenko murder as a "dispute among criminals." "Professionals," Velichko sniffed, "don't use polonium."

Another theory involves both of Litvinenko's known business associates, Lugovoi and Yuri Shvets. In mid-December, Shvets came forward and gave an interview to Tom Mangold of BBC Radio in which he said he believed Litvinenko's death was linked to the due-diligence work they had done on the five Russian "businessmen." According to Shvets, he had compiled an eight-page dossier on one of the men, a senior Kremlin official; the dossier portrayed the man as a criminal mastermind involved in murder and official corruption. Shvets says he delivered the dossier to Litvinenko on September 20, on the understanding that Litvinenko would hand it to their client. At some point, Shvets says, Litvinenko showed the dossier to Lugovoi, apparently to demonstrate how a professional due-diligence report should appear. Shvets's theory is that Lugovoi alerted the subject of the report, and that this man ordered Litvinenko's death.

Yet another theory was advanced by Julia Svetlichnaja, the graduate student who spent hours interviewing Litvinenko before his poisoning. In a column she wrote for London's *Observer* in December 2006, Svetlichnaja said Litvinenko had spoken of compiling a dossier he might use to blackmail unnamed exiled oligarchs. Svetlichnaja, who didn't return e-mails seeking comment for this article, repeated the accusation in January on *60 Minutes*, referring to a single oligarch. In that interview, she would not identify the man in question but said he had a "connection with the Kremlin, a connection with Putin."

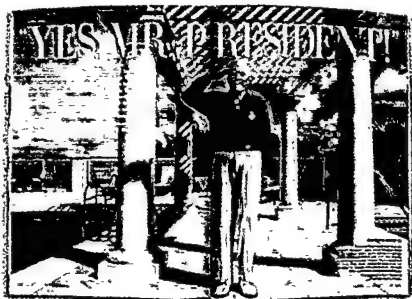
Some in London, however, believe big anti-Kremlin oligarchs like Berezovsky have reaped gains from the publicity surrounding Litvinenko's death. "This would have been a

non-event if not for Berezovsky," says a senior private-security consultant in London, a man who knows Berezovsky well. "It would have been a curiosity that would have been talked about by people like me. But Berezovsky, aided by his mouthpiece Lord Bell, turned it into a media sensation. They did a terrific job. Frankly, I'm embarrassed by the British press, because their coverage of it, of what Berezovsky was feeding them, was so incredibly uncritical. It was one of those stories that was too good to check. I mean, if you look at who gained most, it was Boris Berezovsky." Berezovsky dismisses such talk as Kremlin propaganda.

In the absence of hard, new information, however, propaganda clogs the vacuum. Today, four months after Litvinenko's death, Scotland Yard's investigation seems likely to lead to charges against Lugovoi. If so, there is little likelihood the Kremlin would allow Lugovoi and Kovtun to be extradited, unless the British agree to hand over Berezovsky in return, which is unlikely. Mario Scaramella, meanwhile, has been arrested in Italy, charged with a byzantine plot involving an illegal arms shipment designed to somehow establish his bona fides.

Marina and Anatoly have moved into an apartment in a different section of London. For the moment, Berezovsky is supporting them. Marina has no idea what she will do next. Back in Muswell Hill, their old town house is locked and roped off, a neon-blue tarpaulin across the door. Across the street, Ahkmed Zakayev has yet to explain Litvinenko's death to his grandchildren. "They are still waiting for him to come over," he says. "Every time the doorbell rings, they run to it, [yelling], 'Sasha! Sasha! Sasha!' My grandson is two and a half years old. I don't know how to explain to him that he is never coming back." □

All the Presidents' Men



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 218 were also in the room during that fateful meeting, and both men firmly argued against a sudden air strike. Bobby called it "Pearl Harbor in reverse." He insisted that a sneak attack was not in our tradition, and that we should not

lose sight of "our heritage and our ideals."

Their most vocal opponent was the stiff-collared and mustachioed Acheson, who didn't even have an official role in the Kennedy White House but whose wisdom and years of service to Truman made him a trusted adviser on issues of foreign affairs—a presidency man, perhaps, loyal as much to the office as to its occupant. Acheson derided Bobby's comments as overly emotional pleas lacking "the trained lawyer's analysis." But if J.F.K. had listened to Acheson, it would still have fallen to McNamara to give the order that in his eyes would have been potentially cataclysmic—that or resign, the way Secretary of State William Jennings Bryan did, rather than join in Woodrow Wilson's decision to send American forces to fight in World War I.

Similarly, Nixon's attorney general El-

iot Richardson and his deputy, William Ruckelshaus, quit rather than go through with Nixon's order to fire Watergate special prosecutor Archibald Cox. And Jimmy Carter's secretary of state Cyrus Vance did the same over the ill-fated 1980 attempt to rescue American hostages in Iran. Yet, more commonly, there comes a point when the presumed truth teller simply swallows his pride and becomes a loyal staffer. One can only wonder how many of these exist in the present-day White House.

If there was not as much squabbling among the nation's first Cabinet secretaries, it would only be because there were not as many of them. Thomas Jefferson's Cabinet was composed of just six officers—an attorney general, a postmaster general, and secretaries of state, war, navy, and Treasury. But

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Melnichenko is in Moscow suburbs and is providing evidence to FSB

22.10.2005, 18:48

Former security officer of ex-president Kuchma, Major Nikolay Melnichenko, is currently in the suburbs of Moscow, and is providing evidence to the representatives of SVR [*Foreign Intelligence Service*] and FSB. This is what a former FSB colonel Alexander Litvinenko informed AMI "News – Ukraine," referring to his own sources.

According to Litvinenko's information, Melnichenko disclosed to SVR and FSB officers the location of the London residences of Litvinenko, Russian businessman Boris Berezovskiy, and Chechen emissary Akhmet Zakayev.

In addition, according to Litvinenko, Melnichenko "gave wittingly false evidence that Berezovskiy is connected with Mafia, specifically with a mafiosi, by the nickname Tayvanchik, and that he supplies weapons to the Chechen fighters."

Litvinenko informed that FSB needs this kind of evidence in order to send this information to the special service agencies in other countries.

"The existence of this evidence must become a reason to deny Berezovskiy entrance to this or that country, including Ukraine," – Litvinenko declared.

As ex-officer of FSB, reported that he has in his personal possession similar documents that were provided to the American authorities through the Central Intelligence Agency.

"Similar documents were sent to Italy, Israel, France, Germany, and now, in addition, to Latvia. I do not exclude the fact, that Security Service of Ukraine received similar documents," – stresses Litvinenko.

He also declared that he is expecting a provocation from the Russian special service agencies directed at him, Berezovskiy, or Zakayev.

Source: AMI "News – Ukraine."

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE
FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



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Washington Field Office
601 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20535

(S)

Case number:

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Date: June 22, 2007

Translator:

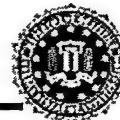
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b7C

Case/File #:

Case Title: ALEXANDER LITVINENKO

b2

Language From: Russian Into: English

☐ **TRANSLATION**

- ☐ Summary
☐ Verbatim
☒ Other: Jist

☒ Document(s) # of pages: 1

☐ Video # of HH:MM: _____

☐ Audio # of sessions: _____
of HH:MM: _____

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☐ Microphone
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☐ E-mail # of e-mails: _____
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[redacted] (WF) (FBI)

From: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 10:27 AM
To: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

Re: [redacted]

~~SECRET~~

(S) ~~RECORD~~ [redacted]

b1

The most recent ADIS record for him shows arrival on 11/30/2006 on Aerosweet (Aerosvit) into NYC under LPR status. This implies that he has been in the country since then but I would be surprised as he was in Ukraine (and possibly then the US or Moscow for medical treatment) in late January 2007 according to open source information.

(S)

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b7C
b2

That probably doesn't help much, but it seems that when he leaves Ukraine it usually makes the news. He may run for the Rada list again in the next election under [redacted] Socialist Party (they're the ones that defected from the Orange Coalition and, along with the independent stance of the Yuliya Tymoshenko Bloc, undermined [redacted] in the Rada).

DATE: 07-15-2010
CLASSIFIED BY 60322 UCLP/PLJ/JN
REASON: 1.4 (C)
DECLASSIFY ON: 07-15-2035

-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 8:52 AM
To: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~NON-RECORD~~

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT
WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE

Thanks!

-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 8:50 AM
To: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

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~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~NON-RECORD~~

Not sure. I'll check around.

b1

(S)

News

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 8:49 AM
To: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Cc: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~NON-RECORD~~

Thanks! Do you know if he is in the US right now? I want to interview him on another matter.

b6
b7C

-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Monday, June 25, 2007 5:15 PM
To: [redacted]

Subject: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~NON-RECORD~~

Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

CEP20070625950058 Kiev Kanal 5 TV in Ukrainian 0600 GMT 25 Jun 07

[OSC Translated Text]

Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

Text of report by Ukrainian television TV 5 Kanal on 25 June

[Presenter] A former major of the state guard, Mykola Melnychenko [who says that he recorded conversations in the office of former President Leonid Kuchma in 1999-2000], is ready to make public recordings featuring incumbent President Viktor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych and other well-known officials. He said so in an interview with 5 Kanal.

[Melnychenko] In 2004, I deliberately abstained from making [the recordings] public and I still do not think it is necessary. Just to make it clear, I do not believe those conversations and those recordings that I transcribed contain anything that could compromise Viktor Andriyovych Yushchenko. I do not see any sense in making public his conversations with Kuchma. However, if Viktor Andriyovych or society are resolutely inclined to reveal the truth and Viktor Andriyovych does not object, no problem, I can do this. I think we can do this not only with Yushchenko but with Viktor Fedorovych [Yanukovych] as well.

[Description of Source: Kiev Kanal 5 TV in Ukrainian -- Pro-Yushchenko television channel owned by Yushchenko ally Petro Poroshenko]

[redacted]

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DERIVED FROM: G-3 FBI Classification Guide G-3, dated 1/97, Foreign Counterintelligence Investigations
DECLASSIFY ON: 20320626
SECRET

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[redacted] (WF) (FBI)

DATE: 07-16-2010

CLASSIFIED BY 60022 UOLP/PLJ/JN

REASON: 1.4 (C)

DECLASSIFY ON: 07-16-2035

From: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2007 9:57 AM
To: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

~~SECRET~~

RECORD [redacted]

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A few more stories I found from the last day or so indicate that [redacted] is in Kyiv, though none explicitly state this. These stories report that he was to participate in an investigative experiment in [redacted] former office (now [redacted] office). Apparently the interview I mentioned yesterday was part of a three part series, so it probably was filmed in advance and the location of the interview is unknown. The second story indicates that they actually carried out the experiment on the 25th.

Also, the ukranews.com website on 20 June reported that [redacted] asserted that [redacted] office was trying to interfere with the experiment by scheduling it for 23 June as they knew [redacted] would be out of Kyiv on 23 June "in connection with the celebrations of the fifteenth anniversary of the class of graduate from Kyiv Higher Military Radio Engineering College of Anti-Aircraft Defense." This indicates he was in Ukraine at the celebrations as of the 23rd and presumably participated personally in the experiment on the 25th. No info though on his whereabouts since the 25th.

Ukrainian president's top aide denies blocking journalist murder probe

CEP20070620950264 Kiev Kanal 5 TV in Ukrainian 1100 GMT 20 Jun 07

[OSC Translated Text]

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT
WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE

Ukrainian president's top aide denies blocking journalist murder probe

Text of report by Ukrainian television TV 5 Kanal on 20 June

A former major of the presidential guard service, Mykola Melnychenko[0], [who reportedly wiretapped President Kuchma's office by secretly placing a recorder under a sofa] has accused the presidential secretariat and its head, Viktor Baloha, of disrupting activities in the investigation into the [murdered journalist Heorhiy] Gongadze case.

According to Melnychenko[0], an investigative experiment was to have taken place in former President Leonid Kuchma's office [which is now Baloha's office] at 1000 this morning, but at 0940 an investigator of the Prosecutor-General's Office reported the cancellation of the event. The former major believes that the investigators got the order from the head of the presidential secretariat. According to Melnychenko[0], Viktor Baloha himself figures in the Gongadze murder case. In addition, he is trying to protect former President Kuchma, former parliament speaker [Volodymyr] Lytvyn and other officials from being held responsible.

For its part, the press service of the presidential secretariat issued a statement today. It reads that Viktor Baloha is not obstructing the course of justice. The release says that, for investigators to be able to conduct the experiment, it is necessary to move the furniture in the office back to where it was during Kuchma's tenure. Considering Baloha's tight working schedule, the secretariat has agreed to the experiment, but on a different day. That is why they call Maj Melnychenko's[0] statements groundless.

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(S)

[Description of Source: Kiev Kanal 5 TV in Ukrainian -- Pro-Yushchenko television channel owned by [redacted] News

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Yushchenko ally Petro Poroshenko]

~~SECRET~~

The story below was from 25 June...

4. 0640 Ex-major Mykola Melnychenko[0] takes part in an forensic test which is a part of the Gongadze murder investigation, explaining how he planted a recording device under a sofa in former President Leonid Kuchma's office. Melnychenko[0] is shown saying that neither he nor original recordings and recording devices can be safe in Ukraine. Correspondent's report.



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-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Sent: Wednesday, June 27, 2007 8:56 AM
To: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

~~SECRET~~

(S) ~~RECORD~~ [redacted]

b1

This helps a lot. Thanks!

-----Original Message-----

From: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 10:27 AM
To: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

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(S) ~~RECORD~~ [redacted]

b1

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b7C



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Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 8:52 AM

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~~SECRET~~

To: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
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~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~NON-RECORD~~

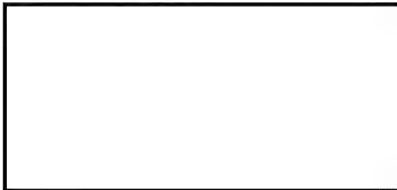
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Sent: Tuesday, June 26, 2007 8:50 AM
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Subject: RE: Former Ukrainian presidential guard ready to release recordings of top officials

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From: [redacted] (WF) (FBI)
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CEP20070625950058 Kiev Kanal 5 TV in Ukrainian 0600 GMT 25 Jun 07

[OSC Translated Text]

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[Description of Source: Kiev Kanal 5 TV in Ukrainian -- Pro-Yushchenko television channel owned by Yushchenko ally Petro Poroshenko]



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~~DERIVED FROM: G-3 FBI Classification Guide G-3, dated 1/97, Foreign Counterintelligence Investigations~~
~~DECLASSIFY ON: 20320626~~
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~~DERIVED FROM: G-3 FBI Classification Guide G-3, dated 1/97, Foreign Counterintelligence Investigations~~
~~DECLASSIFY ON: 20320626~~
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[redacted] (WF) (FBI)

From: [redacted] (CD) (FBI)
Sent: Friday, July 13, 2007 11:44 AM
Subject: Emigre tycoon hints Ukrainian president poisoned with Russian dioxin

b6
b7C

DATE: 07-16-2010

CLASSIFIED BY 60322 UCLP/PLJ/JN

REASON: 1.4 (C)

DECLASSIFY ON: 07-16-2035

~~UNCLASSIFIED~~
~~NON-RECORD~~

Emigre tycoon hints Ukrainian president poisoned with Russian dioxin

CEP20070713950051 Kiev Inter Television in Ukrainian 1700 GMT 12 Jul 07

[OSC Translated Text]

Emigre tycoon hints Ukrainian president poisoned with Russian dioxin

ALL INFORMATION CONTAINED
HEREIN IS UNCLASSIFIED EXCEPT
WHERE SHOWN OTHERWISE

Text of report by Ukrainian Inter TV on 12 July

[Presenter] The Moscow Savelovskiy [district] court has opened deliberations in [Russian emigre tycoon who lives in the UK] Boris Berezovskiy's case. He is charged with embezzling 214m roubles [around 7.8m dollars at the current exchange rate] from the Aeroflot airlines. He is wanted internationally. The court hearings are held in absentia and behind closed doors. Berezovskiy banned his lawyers from defending him in the Russian court, having dismissed the trial as farce.

However, the businessman was provided with a free lawyer whose services are paid for by the state. The next hearing will be held in two weeks. The lawyer asked for time to read 123 volumes of the case.

Berezovskiy is confident the Aeroflot case will collapse. He said this during a TV link-up between Kiev and London. Moreover, Berezovskiy believes the Aeroflot case is a manoeuvre to distract public attention from the investigation into Aleksandr Litvinenko's murder. The businessman said this [Aeroflot] case has no future in Great Britain, therefore he does not care what is going on in Russia.

[Berezovskiy] This case was reopened to distract the attention from the investigation of Aleksandr Litvinenko's murder and Putin's personal involvement in this crime. In fact, I never had anything to do with Aeroflot, except for people, who were close to me, working there. Therefore, documents confirming my participation in the Aeroflot affair are simply non-existent.

[Presenter] When asked whether he knows who poisoned Ukrainian President [Viktor] Yushchenko, the businessmen said he knows many details of this case and hinted that the dioxin that was used to poison Yushchenko had been produced in Russia. However, he did not name any names.

b1

[Description of Source: Kiev Inter Television in Ukrainian -- Commercial station which, until the December 2004 Ukrainian election crisis, actively promoted SDPU(o) leaders and oligarchs Hryhoriy Surkis and Viktor Medvedchuk, as well as displaying a distinct anti-western, pro-Russian bias. Some of the channels journalists publicly rebelled against its pro-government bias during the election crisis, forcing it to adopt a more impartial stance.]

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News

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DATE: 07-15-2010
CLASSIFIED BY: 60322 UCLP/PLJ/JN
REASON: 1.4 (C)
DECLASSIFY ON: 07-15-2035

Russian writer faced threats before death

Newspaper cites arms-sale story

By Vladimir Isachenkov
ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOSCOW — A journalist who plunged to his death from his apartment-building window faced threats while reporting on a highly sensitive story that Russia planned to sell sophisticated missiles to Syria and Iran, his newspaper reported yesterday.

Ivan Safronov, a military-affairs writer for the daily Kommersant, died Friday after plunging from a stairwell window between the fourth and fifth stories.

Kommersant reported yesterday that Mr. Safronov had told his editors he was working on a story about Russian plans to sell weapons to Iran and Syria via Belarus.

The deals, if concluded, could upset the balance of power in the Middle East and strain Russia's relations with Israel and the United States, which have strongly objected to earlier Russian weapons sales to the two countries.

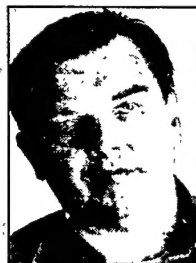
Kommersant reported that Mr. Safronov had recently told colleagues he was warned he would face a criminal investigation for possibly releasing state secrets if he reported claims that Russia had struck a deal to supply Iskander missiles to Syria.

"Ivan Safronov said he was not going to write about it for a while because he was warned that it would create a huge international scandal and the FSB [Federal Security Service] would launch a criminal case on charges of breaching state secrets," the newspaper said.

Mr. Safronov did not say where the warning came from, according to Kommersant, but he had repeatedly been questioned by the FSB — the KGB's main successor agency — which suspected him of divulging state secrets.

In the face of sharp U.S. and Israeli criticism, Moscow has delivered 29 Tbr-M1 mobile sur-

face-to-air missile systems to Iran under a \$700 million contract, and Russian news reports have said Iran was pushing to buy the much more potent, long-



Safronov

range S-300 air-defense missile systems.

Kommersant reported that, before traveling to an international arms fair in the United Arab Emirates last month,

Mr. Safronov had said he would try to confirm rumors that Russia planned to sell S-300 missiles to Iran and Su-30 fighter jets to Syria via Belarus. He later called the editors from Abu Dhabi and said he had confirmation from Russian officials who attended the exhibit, the paper said.

Upon his return, Mr. Safronov told colleagues he also had learned about Russia's plans to provide Syria with Iskander missiles, MiG-29 fighter jets and Pantsyr-S1 air-defense systems, the newspaper reported.

The Iskander, a sophisticated surface-to-surface missile with a range of 175 miles, would give Syria the capability to strike targets in Israel with very high precision. Israel has complained strongly about past sales of anti-tank missiles to Syria, saying some landed in the hands of the militant group Hezbollah.

A 2005 Kommersant report about planned sales of Iskander missiles to Syria caused an uproar, and President Vladimir Putin later said during a trip to Israel that he had blocked the deal, the newspaper reported.

Investigative reporter Anna Politkovskaya, a Kremlin critic, was fatally shot in Moscow in October. The U.S.-based Committee to Protect Journalists said that 13 journalists have been killed in contract-style killings since Mr. Putin took office in 2000.

The Washington Times

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★ WEDNESDAY, MARCH 7, 2007 / PAGE A15

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